CANADIAN THESES ON MICROFICHE

I.S.B.N.

THESES CANADIENNES SUR MICROFICHE

National Library of Canada
Collections Development Branch

Canadian Theses on
Microfiche Service

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale du Canada
Direction du développement des collections

Service des thèses canadiennes
sur microfiche

NOTICE

The quality of this microfiche is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us a poor photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this film is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30. Please read the authorization forms which accompany this thesis.

THIS DISSERTATION
HAS BEEN MICROFILMED
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED

AVIS

La qualité de cette microfiche dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de mauvaise qualité.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, examens publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de ce microfilm est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30. Veuillez prendre connaissance des formules d'autorisation qui accompagnent cette thèse.

LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE
NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE

NL-339 (r. 82/08)

Canada

National Library of Canada | Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Division | Division des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

0-315-05995-8

53916

PERMISSION TO MICROFILM — AUTORISATION DE MICROFILMER

• Please print or type — Écrire en lettres moulées ou dactylographier

Full Name of Author — Nom complet de l'auteur

MARY SEANEEN FULTON

Date of Birth — Date de naissance

JULY 10, 1947

Country of Birth — Lieu de naissance

CANADA

Permanent Address — Résidence fixe

10946-84 AVE EDMONTON, ALTA.
T6G 0V5

Title of Thesis — Titre de la thèse

REASON AND REVOLUTION: A STUDY OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY THEME IN DENIS JOHNSTON'S DRAMA

University — Université

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

M.A. (Fall)

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade

1981

Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse

DR. RONALD AYLING

Permission is hereby granted to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

L'autorisation est, par la présente, accordée à la BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DU CANADA de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans l'autorisation écrite de l'auteur.

Date

Oct. 16/81

Signature

M J Fulton

NL-91 (4/77)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

REASON AND REVOLUTION: A STUDY OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY THEME IN DENIS JOHNSTON'S POLITICAL DRAMA

by

© MARY SEANEEN FULTON

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1981

Microfilm.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR: Mary Seaneen Fulton

TITLE OF THESIS: Reason and Revolution: A Study of the Evolution of the Revolutionary Theme in Denis Johnston's Political Drama

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED: M.A.

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED: 1981

Permission is hereby granted to THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA LIBRARY to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

(Signed) M. S. Fulton

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

10946 - 84 Avenue

Edmonton, Alberta

T6G 0V5

DATED Dec. 14, 1981.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Reason and Revolution: A Study of the Evolution of the Revolutionary Theme in Denis Johnston's Political Drama" submitted by Mary Seaneen Fulton in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

R.F. Ayling
Supervisor

James V. DeFelice

Date Dec. 14, 1981

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze four of Denis Johnston's plays, The Old Lady Says 'No!', The Moon in the Yellow River, The Scythe and the Sunset and The Golden Cuckoo, from the perspective of the revolutionary theme. The first chapter argues that Johnston's political dramas are discussion or problem plays debating the validity of insurrectionary action as a means of achieving political change. What emerges from the process of debate in the plays is a dialectical structure which is exemplified in characterisation, theme, motif and form. This is defined as the "revolutionary dialectic." The revolutionary dialectic functions in the plays from three perspectives: the ideological as it is concerned with political action, the psychological, as concerned with character, and the metaphysical as it relates to the paradoxes of the human condition and the problem of good and evil. While Johnston is suspicious of violent revolution, he, nevertheless, asserts the necessity to react against the conventional mores and values of society. Thus, although politically conservative, he is an iconoclast, and as such, a metaphysical rebel. Consistently, there is a movement in the plays from the political to the metaphysical, on which level the revolutionary dialectic is resolved, or at least transcended by a ritualistic act, an epiphany. The latter part of Chapter I examines The Old Lady Says 'No!' as an embryonic statement of Johnston's views on revolution, and moreover, briefly discusses Johnston's expressionism, which is a major influence on the form of his later political dramas, in particular The Moon in the

Yellow River and The Scythe and the Sunset.

The second and third chapters deal with The Moon in the Yellow River and The Scythe and the Sunset, respectively, from the point of view of the revolutionary dialectic. In The Moon in the Yellow River the romantic hero, the idealist, is juxtaposed to the man of action and the political realist. The resolution of the dialectical opposites within the play is ritualistic. The Scythe and the Sunset more completely engages the political theme of revolution, and juxtaposes the motivations and actions of the rebel hero and Johnston's raissoneur. The psychological treatment of character is more exhaustive from the perspective of the revolutionary theme in the later play, and once again conflict is resolved in a ritualistic catharsis.

Chapter IV concludes the discussion of The Moon in the Yellow River and The Scythe and the Sunset with a short summation of Johnston's view of death. Chapter IV is also a brief examination of the most recent version of The Golden Cuckoo from the vantage of the revolutionary dialectic, as it is exemplified particularly in form and in the character of Dotheright, perhaps Johnston's most clearly defined metaphysical rebel. Attention is paid to the various revisions to The Golden Cuckoo: the revisions to that work show Johnston's continual concern with experimentation in form.

Throughout, the study is concerned with recurrent patterns in Johnston's political thought and metaphysical vision. In theme as well as in form these preoccupations are shown to be central to Johnston's dramatic achievement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For their unfailing support and encouragement, I wish to thank Dr. Ronald Ayling, my supervisor; Dr. Fred Radford; my parents, John and Sybil O'Rourke; my husband, Robert; my children, Elizabeth, Robin, Sean and Billy; my sisters, Peggy and Louise; my friends, Sheila Rich, Elsa Rice, Bev Grayson; and for her patience and proficiency, Linda Pasmore.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	REVOLUTION, RITUAL AND THE OLD LADY SAYS 'NO!'	1
II.	ROMANCE AND REALITY: THE MOON IN THE YELLOW RIVER	25
III.	THE REVOLUTIONARY DIALECTIC IN THE SCYTHE AND THE SUNSET . .	59
IV.	CONCLUSION: THE METAPHYSICAL REBEL	94
	FOOTNOTES	106
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	111

CHAPTER I

REVOLUTION, RITUAL AND THE OLD LADY SAYS 'NO!'

> In ritual as in the theatre a human community directly experiences its own identity and reaffirms it. This makes theatre an extremely political, because pre-eminently social, form of art. And it is of the very essence of ritual that it not only provides its congregation (or in theatrical terms, its audience) with a collective experience on a high spiritual level, but also in very practical terms teaches them, or reminds them of, its codes of conduct, its rules of social coexistence. All drama is therefore a political event: it either reasserts or undermines the code of conduct of a given society.[1]

The application of the idea that drama is a "political event" is particularly appropriate to a discussion of Denis Johnston's dramatic works, for it underscores his consummate interest in the revolutionary process, from both a highly specific political perspective and, more significantly, from a psychological and metaphysical perspective--as the act of political revolt forces an examination of motives and values by the perpetrators of revolutionary activities in the plays. It seems that, for Johnston, the act of revolution, at least in its metaphysical sense as a reaction against the spiritual and moral norms of society, is an essential part of the individual's growth to psychological and spiritual integrity. Exemplifying the necessity of the revolutionary stance in the epistemological process dramatized in his works, is the dedication of Johnston's philosophical work, The Brazen Horn:

> A NON-BOOK FOR THOSE WHO,
> IN REVOLT TODAY, COULD BE
> IN COMMAND TOMORROW.[2]

The salient words of the dedication are, of course, "those who, in revolt today," who, Johnston implies, as revolutionaries share a more perceptive level of consciousness, and are therefore critical of the social, political, and moral ikons of their society. Johnston's revolutionaries are Blake's "Young Men of the New Age," who, as Blake exhorts, must revolt against the "Hirelings" of the "Camp, Court, University and Church."[3] Thus, in a general and universal context, revolution as it is used by Johnston can be defined as a rejection of philistinism--both political and religious. The theme of revolution--as a political act and as a metaphysical concept--is central to four of Johnston's major plays: The Old Lady Says 'No!' (1929), The Moon in the Yellow River (1931), The Golden Cuckoo (1939), and The Scythe and the Sunset (1958). Indeed, Gene A. Barnett comments that rebellion is "the single most important theme running through his work".[4] It is, therefore, surprising that no major work has been devoted to Johnston's treatment of the revolutionary theme. The present study is an attempt to rectify this undeserved critical neglect. For in the context of twentieth century Irish politics, and especially in the light of the present political situation in Ireland, Johnston's examination of insurrection and its perpetrators is perceptive and timely. The politics of the revolutions which occur in the plays are finally ancillary to the spiritual or metaphysical revolt that takes place; nevertheless, political rebellion is always pivotal to the movement of the action. Revolutionary activity can thus be seen as a metaphor of the moral and social conflict the characters in the plays experience.

From almost all perspectives, Johnston's work emerges from a revolutionary ethos. His preoccupation with a political theme, particularly that of revolution, is typically Irish. That it is ritualized in

the drama is, again, typically Irish, for there seem to be inextricable links between theatre, ritual and nationalism, as exemplified in Irish art and political history. In The Imagination of an Insurrection, William Irwin Thompson analyzes the encounter between literature and revolution. To Thompson, the insurrectionary activities of the Irish revolutionaries were the actualization of imagination in history. He comments:

> The Irish revolutionaries lived as if they were in a work of art, and this inability to tell the difference between sober reality and the realm of imagination is perhaps one very important characteristic of a revolutionary. The tragedy of actuality comes from the fact that when, in a revolution, history is made momentarily into a work of art, human beings become the material that must be ordered, molded, or twisted into shape.[5]

Moreover, F. X. Martin maintains that the 1916 Rising was consciously staged as a drama--as a symbolic gesture for posterity.[6] As drama, then, the Rising is a realization of centuries of propagandistic art advocating rebellion as a logical and legitimate result of patriotic fervor. The price of patriotism, however, is seen by Johnston to be death and it is how his characters deal with the reality of the price they must pay for their ideological and political rebellion that generates dramatic conflict in the plays. Johnston rejects "the politics of murder" and the uncritical, militant propaganda of Pearse's The Singer, for example; in contrast, his plays are statements dramatizing the futility of revolution as a means to achieve political freedom, in which violent revolution is seen primarily as culminating in spiritual and physical death for the individual, family or nation. Nevertheless, for all his clear-sighted criticism and satire, Johnston's sympathies are often with his political revolutionary--as the complexities of the Irish political situation are

fully represented in his drama. Culturally, Johnston is heir to Ireland's eight hundred year long history of dissent and rebellion against England, and especially the revolutionary politics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which were arguably the most salient and powerful forces shaping Ireland's society and culture. It was during Johnston's childhood that Ireland experienced her cultural renaissance and literary revival, which was nurtured by Yeats and Lady Gregory, and a major part of the resurgence of the politics of nationalism and rebellion. The rediscovery of Ireland's history, language, and literature may have initially had a literary expression, but with the fall of Parnell and the failure of Home Rule, inexorably that expression became political and violent.

Johnston was fifteen at the time of the Easter Rising in 1916; one year later at the age of sixteen he attempted (unsuccessfully) to join the I.R.A. During the Rising, Johnston and his well-to-do Anglo-Irish Ascendancy family were held as hostages and their home occupied for several days. He recalls the incident in the preface to The Scythe and the Sunset:

> I was a school boy at the time of the Rising and for the greater part of three days my home was fortified by four male members of De Valera's battalion while we of the family were held, supposedly as prisoners, but actually as hostages.[7]

Thus, the impact of the 1916 insurrection was for him both personal and immediate. Johnston, though then a youngster, noted the ineptitude of the rebels, an observation he later uses in characterizing the revolutionaries in his plays, who, whatever their motives or aspirations, are portrayed as ineffectual antiheroes. In this period, however, rebellious ideologies and political activites have a much broader context

than Ireland. The expressionist movement, primarily a European phenomenon, was a major influence on Johnston's early work, particularly as exemplified in The Old Lady Says 'No!', his first play, produced in 1929. Thus, the Irish climate of political instability and of incipient and later violent revolutionary activity is paralleled by extremist expressionist assaults on conventional aesthetic forms--in painting, sculpture, poetry, and drama--and, in a more diffuse manner, by radical political movements on the continent.

In this sense, the Irish political situation, embodying as it did (and does) consistently recurrent rebellion, can be viewed as a microcosm of modern consciousness as it is reflected in twentieth century drama. For, as Robert Brustein states in The Theatre of Revolt, the dominant attitude of the modern theatre from Ibsen onward has been one of revolt--the legacy of "an essentially romantic inheritance."[8] The expressionist movement is merely one mode of artistic dissent and a manifestation of German Romanticism in a twentieth century context. Brustein's comment that the modern dramatist is "a metaphysical rebel" attempting to achieve unity and order through his work in a world of chaos and spiritual disintegration,[9] supports Johnston's stance of metaphysical rebellion. In fact, the latter's iconoclasm, and his rejection of conventional religion, contributes to an artistic vision of the absurd not far from those of his purely existential contemporaries, Beckett and Ionesco. Johnston's revolutionary dramas, apparently enmeshed in Irish political history, transcend the parochial concerns of nationalist causes to achieve what David Krause calls the "higher nationalism--the search for the truth about man, the quintessential nature of his character and his world."[10] All three plays--The Moon in

the Yellow River, The Scythe and the Sunset, and The Golden Cuckoo--the first two being the major focus of this study, dramatize a political process which ultimately evolves to a religious or ritualistic experience, resulting in a catharsis in religious terms, an epiphany, Johnston's solution to the paradox of the irreconcilable tension between good and evil.

Johnston's major preoccupation can be described as a search for a resolution of certain paradoxical issues--the central problem being the difficulty of acting on ideals in an unjust and absurd world, a world in which good and evil are inextricably intermeshed. Conventional answers to the problem of good and evil have failed to satisfy Johnston whose own theology resembles Zoroastrianism, in so far as he perceives evil as an essential component of the dualistic structure of existence. As Virginia O'Reilly notes, Johnston's characters do indeed inhabit "a peculiarly Blakean realm 'where Contrarieties are equally true.'"[11] In the process of his spiritual quest, Johnston creates in his revolutionary drama a tension between the dualities of illusion and reality, ideal and action, life and death, and good and evil. These "contrarieties" are antithetical to each other, and the juxtaposition of thesis-antithesis creates a tension which is, therefore, dialectical and which generates a contrapuntal movement in action and dialogue throughout the plays as the characters discuss and act out the inevitable and inescapable conflict between contrary modes of thought and behaviour. Perpetually at the root of this dialectical tension, revolution, either political or metaphysical, is a necessary starting point for the epistemological process dramatized in the plays. Echoing Johnston's conviction, Camus asserts that: "rebellion is one of the essential dimensions of man. It is our historic

reality. Unless we choose to ignore reality we must find our values in it."[12] Hence, it can be said that the epistemological process represented in Johnston's drama dealing with revolution is generated by the "revolutionary dialectic," in that Johnston's dialectic is based on the reality of rebellion as a historical and psychological imperative.

The revolutionary dialectic is both ideological and dynamic as it involves a movement between opposing or antithetical points of view, and psychological as it informs the analysis of character. The ideological concern that is revealed, particularly in The Moon in the Yellow River, is an interrogation of the validity of armed conflict as a means to political change, that is, murder as a political argument, from both a practical and moral viewpoint. Because of the intensity of conflict that civil war generates, the dramatization of that conflict facilitates the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas and attitudes, not only about immediate political issues, but also about social, moral and spiritual values. Touched by a revolutionary situation, all of Johnston's characters become involved in an existential crisis. Although not totally alienated from their social environment, the revolutionaries in The Moon in the Yellow River and in The Scythe and the Sunset, and Dotheright of The Golden Cuckoo, are engaged in a struggle against the political establishment, thereby isolating themselves from that socio-political order. Their revolt forces an examination of that order; nevertheless, of paramount importance in their struggle is the examination of their own motives, aspirations, and values. If Johnston's revolutionary drama is a journey from illusion to reality, the reality that his characters discover at the end of that passage is themselves and their identity as, stripped of their illusory ideals, they are forced to act. The complexity of

character development in the drama originates in the dialectical tension between ideal and action. Camus' description of the revolutionary process can also be seen as an apt summary of the inherent paradox faced by Johnston's heroes:

> Rebellion engenders exactly the actions it is asked to legitimate. Therefore it is absolutely necessary that rebellion find its reasons within itself, since it cannot find it elsewhere. It must consent to examine itself in order to learn how to act.[13]

Johnston's revolutionary hero, an idealist, is forced to act because he rejects the injustice of the status quo, but, truly the romantic, his actions are merely ineffectual gestures. In his use of force, he must, as Johnston says, play the other man's game. Rejecting an imperialist power because of its military aggression and its oppression of the colonized state the rebel is automatically compromised by having to oppose military force by means of force. The ideals of the purist are sullied by his action; therefore, revolutionary activity is always futile as far as Johnston is concerned, and that futility is realized by his use of a satiric mode.

Like Shaw, Johnston employs the comic mode to debunk social convention, and conventional morality. For Johnston, as for Shaw, "laughter is one way of dealing with the inadequacies of life, the solecisms of experience."[14] While Shaw, to effect social change, employs a technique that works by incongruity in a dialectical process,[15] Johnston, particularly in The Moon in the Yellow River and in The Scythe and the Sunset, uses the technique of continual contrast to expose the danger of adhering to idealism, at the risk of ignoring reality. However, his ultimate purpose is not social reform, as is Shaw's. And although

they are written in a comic and satiric mode, Johnston's plays reveal a continual preoccupation with experimentation in technique and style. Robert Hogan's observation that Johnston's work is too intellectual for the dramatic medium, and hence "he is at war with his form,"[16] points to his proclivity to innovate. Moreover, as Johnston himself comments, "the variety of styles that the plays disclose is simply a reflection of my search for an adequate means of communication."[17] Even in Nine Rivers from Jordan (prose version), Johnston utilizes an extensive variety of styles and forms.[18]

As we trace the dramatic pattern of the four plays we shall see an evolution in the treatment of the revolutionary theme; nevertheless, the diversity and variety in style remains constant throughout all of Johnston's drama. The issues which form the revolutionary dialectic are initially apparent in The Old Lady Says 'No!'; however, the dialectical form and theme become more complex and sharply defined in the later plays. The Moon in the Yellow River exemplifies Johnston's diversity in style which is paralleled by the content of the play--the sub-plots complicating its action. Central to the play, the revolutionary theme consists chiefly, as in The Old Lady, of an examination of the romantic myths of patriotic martyrdom. The same theme, of course, generates the dialectical discussion of The Scythe and the Sunset; however, in the much later play, the psychology of revolution is more exhaustively explored; the play is a more complete analysis of the political and moral dilemma of revolutionary action. Coming between The Moon and The Scythe, The Golden Cuckoo (first produced in 1939) is treated in the conclusion of the present study; the treatment of the political theme is a departure from a violent revolutionary situation. Metaphysical rebellion is the

primary concern of the play; moreover, recent revisions to The Cuckoo reflect Johnston's continual preoccupation with experimentation in style and form.

Johnston's first play, The Old Lady Says 'No!' is an innovative tour de force, Ireland's first expressionist play. Although two later plays, The Moon in the Yellow River and The Scythe and the Sunset, are in a representational form, elements of non-realistic or surrealistic style and technique reveal themselves, especially in speech. Moreover, in a newly revised version of The Golden Cuckoo, Johnston has introduced non-realistic and Brechtian elements into an otherwise realistic form. In these changes to The Golden Cuckoo Johnston is emphasizing the non-realistic mode and returning to his roots in the theatre--to the non-illusionist form of The Old Lady Says 'No!' In the plays with a revolutionary theme or motif, expressionism is a major influence on form. The overlapping of realistic and expressionistic elements of style parallels the ideological or thematic dialectic. As well as being revealed in theme and character, the revolutionary dialectic is revealed in the tension created by the use of contrasting styles or modes.

The exaggerated, surrealistic style of expressionism is an appropriate vehicle for a revolutionary theme, which involves a discussion of radical, political and moral philosophy. Moreover, expressionism is particularly suited to a satirical or critical treatment of revolution: the flexibility in time, space and action, all of which can be altered and distorted, and the removal of the need for logical progression in plot, and the lack of character development, facilitate the freedom to innovate and treat ideas and themes as abstractions, immediately and directly. In The Old Lady Says 'No!' for example, the

characters are exaggerated stereotypes, Emmet being the generic patriot,[19] from Irish society spanning the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. Each character and his dialogue is a subjective realization of the romantic myths and ideals of Irish nationalism which are exploded in the play. Ironically, Johnston uses expressionism, an outgrowth of German Romanticism, to satirize what are essentially Romantic ideals embodied in typical romantic heroes, especially Emmet--The Speaker, a type of Byronic hero. The play inverts the romanticized, but hallowed image of Irish patriotism and nationalist ideals, and this negative view of revolutionary politics is given expressive emphasis, of course, by the expressionistic style.

Although The Old Lady Says 'No!' is not a major focus of the present study, a brief preliminary exegesis of its expressionist form and an examination of its theme is essential to subsequent discussion of the three later plays, which, though they may appear diverse and different in form and content, in fact share many of the characteristics of The Old Lady, in form and theme alike. The Old Lady is embryonic, and reveals an initial, explicit statement of a revolutionary theme. The treatment of the revolutionary theme is dialectical to the extent that the validity and value of revolutionary action is debated. While there exists a dialectical tension between the ideology of civil rule and order and the impulses of the romantic revolutionary, the role of revolution in Irish history, and the romantic temperament is unequivocably condemned.

In "A Note on What Happened," Johnston's afterword to the play, he implies that a central concern of the play is: "The theme of the Romantic temperament seeking for an environment in which to express itself . . . ."[20] Giving the revolutionary stance credence, Johnston

further states: "The search for the Land of Heart's Desire is as old and as universal as the Holy Grail. . . . Every land has had its share of Emmets preaching their burning messages to the accompaniment of barnyard noises, and Ireland has more than her share."[21] Citing Plato and Nietzsche who have promulgated man's responsibility and capacity to alter his environment, Johnston salutes the attitude of mind of the revolutionary, for in this sense, as a reaction against environment, revolution is seen by Johnston to be "a creative act." Nevertheless, in The Old Lady the tension between ideal and action does not have the same tautness or intensity as in later plays. Despite Johnston's comment, revolution is not dramatized as a creative act in the play--although both sides of the revolutionary issue are presented. The play critically examines the role of the revolutionary hero, Robert Emmet, in the rebellion of 1803, its satirical focus encompassing the larger myths of Irish nationalism. Modelled on the American expressionist play, Beggar on Horseback, and upon Capek's The Land of Many Names, The Old Lady bears more than a passing resemblance to Strindberg's A Dream Play and The Ghost Sonata in its surrealistic and dreamlike form and structure. In his exhaustive study of expressionism, John Willet quotes Johnston describing the play "as an expressionist gesture of dissent":[22] however, in his notes to the play, Johnston refuses to employ the term expressionist in regard to The Old Lady. He states: "The Old Lady Says 'No!' is not an expressionist play and ought never to have been mistaken for one"; claiming instead to have "attempted to evolve a thematic method based on simple association of ideas,"[23] what he terms "the melodic method". Johnston's play does not exemplify the extremes of some of the German expressionists--it lacks the sharply, angular distortions, and Gothic,

nightmarish qualities of The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, for example. Nevertheless, the play contains basic elements of expressionism and can quite justly be placed in that category.

Like Strindberg's A Dream Play, the play is not structured as conventional narrative. Rather, it is arranged as a piece of music with various movements comprised of voices that confront each other freely moving from idea to idea, image to image, as in a dreamstate. In the original production, "the rhythmatic chanting of the Choruses was carried out to the throb of a drum, for which purpose a considerable portion of the dialogue had practically to be scored--the parts coming in one on top of the other as in instrumental music or a madrigal"[24]--hence, the term "melodic method". The playlet which opens the play consists almost entirely of lines drawn from nineteenth century Irish verse (what Johnston terms 'Erin a tear and a smile school')--the lyricism of the language reinforcing the musical tenor of the play.

Once the Speaker, who is simultaneously Robert Emmet and the actor playing his role, is hit on the head, the dream play begins as he wanders through modern Dublin in an hallucinatory daze. The play proper, the Speaker's journey through the netherworld of Dublin in search of Sara Curran, is reminiscent of Bloom's night time rambles through the underside of Dublin in the "Nighttown" episode of Ulysses. In his quest, the Speaker encounters a cross-section of Dublin society. The speech and style of the opening scene changes from the pseudo-operatic and romantic style of Sara Curran's and Emmet's love-tryst to the realistic style and speech of contemporary Dublin which quickly alters in turn to expressionist dialogue. This abrupt contrast forces both settings into ironic relief as Emmet is abruptly moved from 1803 to 1926, the year in which the drama

was written. A sense of unreality is injected into the "realistic" world of modern Dublin by the Speaker's split consciousness, and the contemporary scene comments on the earlier setting as the crassness and philistinism of modern Dubliners undercuts Emmet's patriotic ideals which are shown to be unfulfilled and mocked by reality.

Johnston's characteristic use of contrasting and disparate modes is reflected in the styles of speech employed, which counterpoint each other in the play. Their juxtaposition provides dramatic and ironic contrast for the shifting perspective from which we are shown Emmet's patriotic dream. The blend of styles--from the poetic to straightforward realism to expressionism--is again exemplified in the opening scene of Part II, which is an expressionistic set piece, satirizing the intellectuals and philistines of contemporary Dublin. The Irish nationalist ethos--its political and cultural identity--is defined and reinforced by the recitation of patriotic songs, poems and the general's war memories, antiphonies of Irish nationalism which are both hymns to revolution and hymns to death, the elements of patriotic myth.

The motif of patriotic verse provides a unifying thread throughout the play which moves in apparent disorder from street to tenement to salon with characters who fade out, change and reappear as in a dream. Besides providing unity, Emmet's poetry is a continual counterpoint to the realistic dialogue which intensifies and shifts to the surrealistic, repetitious, elliptical speech of expressionism. The point at which Emmet receives the blow to his head aptly demonstrates the expressionist shift in theme and dialogue. The Speaker's rather incoherent speech gives way to the staccato, rhythmic whispers of the Forms:

"Poor, poor, poor, poor
Hit him, hit him
With a gun
Butt-end
Dirty, dirty."[25]

Here, the heroic is reduced to the grimmest interpretation of reality. Moreover, the disintegration of the speaker's recitation to Sara Curran with its frequent pauses as he reaches, half lucid, for the right words exemplifies the ineffectuality and degeneration of his romantic role.

> "They that are down will be down . . . down . . . up . . . erect . . . redeemable . . . love thee, Sara . . . redeemablecurran . . . ." (27)

Quite apart from employing expressionistic technique in dialogue, the play makes full use of chiaroscuro. Again the transition from the initial scene of the play to the darkened stage and the appearance of the Forms is a typical example of expressionistic lighting. The play opens in darkness with the light in Sara Curran's window providing the explicit contrast in light and dark which typifies expressionism and continues throughout the play as the lights are alternately brightened and dimmed. The forms initially appear as shadows, as do the "shadows" representing Yeats, Joyce, Swift and Wilde who appear on a backcloth in the last movement of the play. The outlining of line and form, that is, the shadowing and shading, is prototypical expressionism with its emphasis on line, manifested for example in the angular anguished lines and forms of German woodcuts of the early twentieth century. The Old Lady does not share this hardness of line, nevertheless, the lighting plays a major, obtrusive role in outlining scenes and signalling shifts in scene, setting and action, modulating the movement of the play. It becomes strikingly metaphoric as the Speaker lies on the stage attended by the

doctor and stage hand: the lights pulse to the sound of a distant "boom-boom-boom as of someone tapping on a big drum" (27). Not only do the pulsing lights and tapping of the drum imitate the actor's heartbeat as Canfield points out,[26] but in addition the rhythm of the lights and sound is repeated in the measured pauses of the Speaker's speech, exemplifying the play's unity of form--in its visual, musical and verbal details--a triumph of Johnston's inner design. Moreover, as the music, sound and lights move in a kind of rhythm, so do the characters, as they fade in and out, and merge and re-emerge into and out of each other.

The departure from realism that expressionism allows for is demonstrated by the characterization and casting of characters in The Old Lady: primarily, the characters are personifications of universal types or abstract principles. For example, Emmet is a typical romantic hero and patriot; Sara Curran is a romantic heroine; and especially in Part II in the salon scene, characters are representative of differing elements of Dublin or Irish society. Moreover, as in Strindberg's A Dream Play, these characters merge and change only to reappear in different form as different characters. The physical resemblance of these characters links them in a deliberate manner. Both Grattan and Major Sirr, played by the same actor, represent the role of law and civil order. Sara Curran's transformation into The Old Woman enacts the disintegration of patriotic ideals and seems to exemplify the impossibility of their survival in modern society. Sara Curran and The Old Woman are a composite portrait of Cathleen Ni Houlihan, who characteristically appears in Irish literature as both a beautiful young girl and an old harridan. The stereotyping of characters facilitates social and political satire, as do the actors' multiple roles, for the audience is prevented from

identification with the characters to any great degree. In other words, this technique of characterization creates an alienation effect which reinforces the satire by forcing a critical detachment. In addition, although the use of types may be characteristically expressionistic, it is also a standard comic device used by Johnston, an element of his satire in many of the comic scenes which abound in his work.

The comedy originates in the discrepancy between the predictability of the typical character's behaviour (that is, our expectations about his role) and his actual behaviour in the play. A character's behaviour is, at times, a bizarre variation on the stereotype, usually exaggerated and at once ironic and confusing. The Speaker's shooting of Joe exemplifies this kind of departure and as an abstraction is a microcosm of the revolutionary dilemma. The Older Man, from whom the Speaker takes a gun, and the Younger Man ironically accuse the Speaker of play-acting the role of Robert Emmet, and thereby denigrating the Irish race--holding it up "to scorn before the world". Both Emmet and the characters surrounding him cling to a superficial ideal of patriotism, "the appearance" of patriotic ideals being literally realized in Emmet's uniform. The Speaker's response to their demands that he remove his uniform, is to shoot Joe. His reaction is extreme; the entire scene, in fact, is surreal in its exaggeration. The absence of a reasonable motive and the cold blooded destructiveness of the act is nightmarish, an absurd depiction of the effects of civil insurrection on an innocent population. The Speaker's motive points to the theme of acting from the irrational urge "to save face," which Johnston develops more fully in <u>The Scythe and the Sunset</u>.

> "What could I do? I ask you, what could I do? It was war. I didn't mean to hurt him. . . . Shoot back then! It is war. Shoot! I can die too." (47)

The Speaker's quest for Sara Curran, an emblem of the Holy Grail of Irish nationalism, thus ends in mindless destruction and death. Moreover, the continued discrepancy between 1803 and 1926, the time warp represented by the speaker's split consciousness, acts as a distancing device alienating us from the characters and action, exacerbating the hallucinatory or surreal atmosphere and making Emmet's actions appear the more absurd.

In the use of formal devices to "alienate" or "distance" the audience, Johnston's intentions are crucially similar to those of Brecht inasmuch as a critical detachment is demanded by each playwright from his audience. Brecht defines the objective treatment of text and performance as "complex seeing".

> Thinking above the flow of the play is more important than thinking from within the flow of the play.[27]

From an ideological perspective, both playwrights depict a dialectical process in an historical context. Although not a Marxist, Johnston creates characters trapped in a web of necessity that is determined by historical circumstance. As do Brecht's, Johnston's historical, that is, revolutionary dramas, force "complex seeing" which is accomplished by thinking above the flow of the play. As a result of this objective method, the characters are always secondary to the process they are engaged in or become caught in. The role they play in a dialectical process, itself an ideological debate, transcends their individuation.

The expressionist mode is singularly appropriate in creating a critically conscious response because in its departure from reality it is

a realization or dramatization of a psychological process. Johnston claims no debt to Freud or Adler;[28] nevertheless, The Old Lady does dramatize an attitude of mind, a psychological state. While the play occurs primarily through the agency of the Speaker, it is not simply his psychological state which is depicted. Rather, the attitude of mind revealed in the play is, to use Jung's term, the "collective unconscious" of post-Independence Dublin. Holding all aspects of Dublin society up for examination, from prostitution to the effete socializing of the upper class (where politicians, ex-revolutionaries, and artists like O'Casey and Joyce are satirized), Johnston reveals the attitudes and mores of contemporary Ireland and ironically inverts those attitudes. If, as Johnston says, the play is a search of the romantic temperament for an environment in which to express itself, both the "romantic temperament," represented by the Speaker and the "environment", Dublin, are critically found wanting. Through the agency of the Speaker, the romantic and legendary myth of the Irish national hero is satirically inverted. The Romantic dream personified in the character of Emmet, the Speaker, and enacted in Emmet's quest for his lost love, is proven ineffectual by his failure to achieve his purpose and more pointedly (in the shooting of Joe) is shown to be wantonly destructive.

Moreover, in Part I of the play, the voice of reason, Grattan, who represents the rule of law, the orderly progression of political change, is juxtaposed continually in a dialectical form to the Speaker's romantic and idealistic yearnings. Their debate succinctly expresses one of the issues at the heart of the play--the conflict between patriotic idealism that finds its expression in rebellion, and death, the realistic result of the use of those means to achieve political freedom. The

dialectical conflict becomes therefore a choice between reason and revolution:

> Grattan: Full fifty years I worked and waited, only to see my country's new-found glory melt away at the bidding of the omniscient young Messiahs with neither the ability to work nor the courage to wait . . . Oh, it is an easy thing to draw a sword and raise a barricade. It saves working, it saves waiting. It saves everything but blood . . . . (32-33)

Grattan's dialogue not only expresses a conservative and reactionary political viewpoint, but significantly characterizes revolutionaries, such as Robert Emmet, as messianic leaders, a description of the revolutionary that recurs in greater detail as a motif in both The Moon and The Scythe. Countering Grattan, the Speaker articulates the antithesis of Grattan's call for reason and patience, expressing a romantic preoccupation with death; moreover, death as a climax to the role of patriot-martyr. The motif of play-acting or performance is continued, underscoring the idea of the revolutionary as the actor in a drama of which he is the creator, an important element in the mythos of Irish nationalism.

> He is an old man. He does not understand the way we do. He can only doubt . . . while we believe . . . . believe with heart and soul and every fibre of our tired bodies. Therefore I am not afraid to go on. I will kiss my wounds in the last act. I will march proudly through, head high, even if it must be to my grave. That is the only test. (33)

Grattan's response to the Speaker deserves to be quoted in full because it defines the wages of Irish patriotism: the Speaker's dream results in death, death as a meaningless crucifixion and a national pastime, endlessly repeated in a cycle of despair, the dominant lietmotif of the play.

> Ah, the love of death, creeping like a mist at the heels of my countrymen! Death is the only art in which we own no masters. Death is the only voice that can be heard in this distressful land where no man's word is taken, no man's message heeded, no man's prayer answered except it be his epitaph. Out into every quarter of the globe we go, seeking for a service in which to die: saving the world by dying for a good cause just as readily as we will damn it utterly by dying for a bad one. It is all the same to us. It is the only thing that we can understand. (33)

It is fitting that the dream of death be expressed in an environment of death. As the play progresses, invocations to the dying, the dead, and Ireland as a vast graveyard, described by the Blind Man as belonging "not to them that are on it, but to them that are under it" (68), become more frequent and intense. In fact, the Blind Man's description of Dublin encapsulates the themes of the play: the domination of the present by the sentimental myths of the past, the juxtaposition of the living and the dead. The living world of Dublin, however, is the imagined, mythical Ireland created by her dead poets, a threat to those who believe in her because ironically a justification for the violence of the present.

> In every dusty corner lurks the living world of some dead poet, and it waiting for to trap and to snare them. This is no City of the Living: but of the Dark and the Dead! (63)

The Blind Man who "has his own way of seeing" is a Tiresias-like figure, a blind seer who, as a descendant of the Kings of Thurmond, represents the shade of past heroism and glory, exemplifying in his decrepitude the real decay of heroic ideals. Nevertheless, the Blind Man is a major figure and a precursor of Endymion, the perceptive fool of The Scythe, and the Blind Man's commentary on the final scenes of the play underscores the spiritual blindness of the other characters. The final movement of the play is Joe's wake, orchestrated by the Blind Man, who summons the shadows to dance. What follows the dance of the shadows who

represent some of Ireland's greatest contributors to English literature, is a scene of apocalypse, the final judgment of Emmet, the great shadow, the "Shadow of Ireland's Heart". The multiple allusions to the Old and New Testaments and Anglican prayer and ritual create a Black Mass of Irish national myth, exemplifying the melding of nationalism and religion. For the myths that form the historical consciousness of Ireland are inextricably intertwined with Christian symbol and myth, hence the mythos of Irish nationalism is sacrosanct. Because the practical extension of Irish patriotism, however, ends in death, the sacred or religious element of nationalist myth becomes death-dealing, a curse. In the Speaker's final litany, death and destruction are valued above life. Moreover, the Speaker who equates himself with Christ when he says, "My ministry now is ended", becomes a kind of anti-Christ, a type of anti-hero.

The concept of drama as ritual and as a political act is thus reaffirmed in the closing coda of the play. As a messianic leader, the Speaker fails because contemporary Dublin, whose political independence is in part due to the efforts of Ireland's patriots, is unable to recognize her heroes. Reawakened in the world of the 1920's, the Speaker who is literally fragmented as a personality emerges as a kind of anti-hero whose quest defines him as a prototype of the existential hero in his repetitive wanderings and continuing adherence to the "patriot dream". Infused with the language of Christian ritual, however, the play seems to give the Speaker considerable stature as "The Great Shadow of Ireland's Heart". Nevertheless, although finally cheered by the other characters at the end of the play, the Speaker does not achieve self knowledge. Nor is that Johnston's intention. The Speaker is more the embodiment of a voice and less a developed or substantial character. Because the

characters are reduced to types, dramatic tension is not generated so much by conflict between them, although an ideological conflict exists; instead, dramatic interest or tension arises from the formal texture of the play created by the use of expressionistic elements. The revolutionary dialectic exists in The Old Lady inasmuch as the conflict between reason and revolution is presented in the interchange between Grattan and the Speaker; revolution is unquestionably condemned, however, because it is surrounded by mythic and illusory ideals, and thus becomes blindly destructive, destroying what it should be freeing. What is contrasted effectively in the play are illusion and reality--in which juxtaposition the audience is stripped of its ideals about Dublin, "the strumpet city in the sunset", and Irish political history. Thus, in this case, the dialectical exchange occurs between playwright and audience.

In The Moon in the Yellow River and The Scythe and the Sunset, the epistemological process, the movement from illusion to reality, is closed, and occurs within the framework of the play. Characters are more fully realized and both their ideological debate and the action generate a psychological movement to greater self-awareness and self knowledge. In viewing the four works that deal with revolution the degree of self knowledge attained by revolutionary leaders varies from play to play. The Old Lady Says 'No!' can be considered an introduction to the issues that form the revolutionary dialectic, both in terms of theme and form. The Moon in the Yellow River is an examination of the revolutionary hero and the justification of the "politics of murder". From the point of view of form, Johnston employs a representative or realistic mode; however, a variety of styles reveal themselves in the play. Thus in The Moon the revolutionary dialectic also occurs in the use of contrasting modes.

Ideological issues are much more clearly defined in The Scythe and the Sunset than they are in The Moon in the Yellow River. There is a movement in clarity in the expressions of the revolutionary issue or theme between the two plays. Johnston's treatment of the psychology of revolution evolves and becomes more clearly defined in The Scythe and the Sunset.

The Golden Cuckoo in its latest form is a further permutation of Johnston's characteristically dialectical treatment of revolution. Little conflict exists in the psyche of Dotheright, Johnston's revolutionary. He is precisely defined as a type of Don Quixote whose stabbing at windmills may be ineffectual in practical terms, but in metaphysical terms is necessary, right and successful in its own idiosyncratic way. His character is an example of the metaphysical rebel: he is Johnston's St. Joan. Like The Moon and The Scythe, The Golden Cuckoo is primarily in a realistic mode, but what is of crucial interest in analyzing the play from the point of view of the revolutionary dialectic are the revisions to that form: the employment of contrasting modes sharply defines the metaphysical rebellion that occurs in the play. Although the initial version of The Golden Cuckoo first appeared in the late 30's, Johnston's revisions (made in the 50's and 70's) require that it be treated last in the following discussion of the evolution of the revolutionary theme in Johnston's political drama. The first major restatement of the revolutionary theme after The Old Lady was Johnston's second play, The Moon in the Yellow River and it is to that major work that we shall now turn.

CHAPTER II

ROMANCE AND REALITY: THE MOON IN THE YELLOW RIVER

The Moon in the Yellow River, produced by the Abbey in 1931, is a major departure from the avant-garde expressionism of The Old Lady Says 'No!' to a more familiar realistic mode. The play's representational form and concern with (then) contemporary political issues and Irish nationalism conform to the traditional characteristics and expectations that had evolved to define a "typical" Abbey play. Yet, despite its adherence to the conventions of realism in form and structure, The Moon contains surrealistic elements of style which both intensify and illuminate speech, action and character, at times transforming the play from the mundane to the magical, reminiscent of The Old Lady.

Expressionistic technique is not overt in The Moon as it is in The Old Lady: rather, the freedom in action and character that expressionism allows for is subsumed in a heightening of the realistic surface of the play, manifested particularly in comedy and farce. That is, farcical dialogue and action strain against the realistic mode, continually creating an atmosphere of absurdism that undercuts the representational form. In this way, a dialectical tension is created in the combination of contrasting modes. At high points of dramatic action in the play there is a continual movement to the surreal and absurd.

As does The Old Lady, The Moon critically examines the role of revolution in Irish politics; nevertheless, the play expresses a complex of themes, one being the impact of international industrialism on Ireland.

The play is, therefore, more than a critical look at revolutionary aspirations and values; however, political rebellion is always either a major part of, or influence on the action. For, in terms of political rebellion, the revolutionary dialectic encompasses the theme of international industrialism; The Moon's revolutionaries react against the transition of Ireland from a rural, pastoral retreat to a modern industrialized state. Thus, in its most general interpretation, the dialectical confrontation in the play consists of the old order against the new. The international theme thus becomes part of Darrell Blake and Columba's reaction against the Free State government.

Nevertheless, in his preface to The Moon in the Yellow River, "Let There Be Light", Johnston states the theme of the play simply as international industrialism. Minimizing its Irishness Johnston says:

> Indeed, I have sometimes wondered whether the fact that its setting suggests the Liffey or the Shannon, and that it contains incidents drawn from the conflict of Irregular and Free Stater, is sufficient to constitute The Moon in the Yellow River as an Abbey play at all.[1]

Despite Johnston's remark, the state of civil unrest of the late 1920's is, of course, as equally important a focus of theme and action as is international industrialism. Characters, actions and allusions have international scope; at the same time, however, the action and characterization of the play are localized and typically Irish. Johnston draws on several contemporary political realities for the situation of the plot. A sizeable minority of the Irish people rejected the Treaty of 1921 and continued their clandestine revolutionary activities well on into the late 1920's. The I.R.A. rebellion was initially a reaction against the exclusion of Ulster from the Free State, and, subsequently,

a reaction against the violent repressive measures of the new Irish Free State government: between 1922 and 1923, the latter executed seventy-seven political prisoners without trial.[2]

Moreover, the Shannon Hydroelectrical Power Plant, approved in 1923, was a controversial issue from 1922 onwards in the infant Republic and, although the plant was never actually destroyed, it was in constant danger of insurrectionary assault. A massive project built under the supervision of German engineers, it was also to some extent a measure of political expediency, a "diversionary tactic" to draw attention away from the I.R.A. opposition.[3] Economically, its purpose was to provide inexpensive electrical power for the immediate industrialization of rural Ireland. Thus, from a positive point of view, the Shannon scheme was an attempt by the new government to bring Ireland into the twentieth century industrially and stimulate the economy. Negative response to the project was xenophobic, ideological and ecological. The project, directed by foreigners, would despoil the countryside; moreover, from an ideological point of view, the project could result in Ireland's submission to the "cult of the machine." International industrialism became, in effect, an issue in Irish politics. The various strands forming the contemporary Irish political situation are woven into the play and are the occasion for the conflict and action of the plot and an important element in characterization.

The play's focus expands to encompass the universal implications of its themes largely through multiple geographical references and allusions to classical myth and history, while simultaneously narrowing to an intimate view of Ireland and the Irish. The dynamics of the play's shifting perspective can be described as a constant movement from general

to particular, conversely from the unique or local to the universal depending on the character experiencing the action. In some ways there are similarities with Eisenstein's technique of collision-linkage montage, which creates violent but dramatically effective metaphoric juxtaposition of scenes to advance narrative and theme. Through the agency of Dobelle, Tausch and Blake, the point of view shifts from Dobelle's living room with its view of the Works, to China, the Gran Chaco, Munchen, Dante's Hell, to constantly return to Ireland which, by extreme contrast, is comic, mundane, and as Dobelle says of his home, "a deuced unmannerly house"--replete with the buffoons, George and Potts, and the comically aggressive Agnes.

The constant shift in perspective occasioned by change in point of view or mood and action is part of the dialectical process in which there is a continual motion between contrasting or contrary modes of thought or behaviour. One of Johnston's principle techniques in modulating shifting perspectives or movements of point of view is verbal irony and ironic deflation. In this ironic interplay between characters, we are presented with a kaleidoscope of differing views on the Irish in revolt: twentieth century man for or against the machine, active man versus the passive or contemplative man, the romantic idealist pitted against the cynical realist, the life of imagination or the spirit as opposed to materialism. The opposing points of view form antithetical poles in the dialectic or argument carried on throughout the play in Johnston's Blakean realm "where Contrarieties are equally true".

As in Shaw, these dialectical contrarieties are revealed in extensive conversation, witty and humorous debates, but in The Moon the arguments or confrontations between characters are punctuated by a great variety of

action and movement, some of it totally unpredictable. In its various and lively action and brilliant flashes of color and vitality, it is reminiscent of The Old Lady Says "No!" The comic, but analytical discourse of Act I, for example, between Dobelle and Tausch is invaded time and again by the farcical action of the other inhabitants of the Dobelle household. The arrival of the I.R.A. men, Willie and Blake, gives the action a more focused direction as the revolutionary theme begins to dominate and "international industrialism" takes on an Irish character and is worked out both in an Irish and a specific political context. The plot is generated first by the dialectic--in particular between Dobelle and Tausch, then Blake and Tausch--and secondly by the insurrectionary intent to blow up the powerhouse.

Participants in the various individual confrontations that propel the plot forward, the characters are also representative types inasmuch as they function in an ideological framework. Tausch is, for example, an ideologue and a "practical man" representing the new age of industrialism and preaching the tenets of technological progress. In the play, in which the active man versus the romantic visionary is a major dialectical contrast, Tausch is both. He is a practical man of science, an electrical engineer, but his commitment to modern industrial progress is romantic, visionary and, it appears, deluded. Much of the action and dialogue of the play deflates his vision of the future. Nevertheless, Tausch is not dealt with totally unsympathetically. Early in Act I, Tausch's commitment to industry and technology is matched by his enthusiastic devotion to music, an appropriate exemplum of German culture, and to his family. Tausch exemplifies two conflicting strains in the German psyche: the barbaric, which allows the adoption of a new,

Godless technology, and the artistic, spiritual and intellectual elements of a culture whose achievement has been a major contribution to Western art and thought.

Johnston's treatment of Tausch "the Bosch" is acutely perceptive. As a manifestation of the German bourgeois consciousness (circa 1930) and as a personification of the new technocracy about to launch the Third Reich, the character of Tausch surely anticipates the political and social changes that occurred in Germany in 1932-34. As Tausch says of Germany:

> There we still have the virile youth of a new nation: hope, courage and the ability to rise again. Put Germany in the saddle and you will find that she can ride. (109)

Whether in fact Johnston has the rise of Hitler in mind specifically is irrelevant to an analysis of the play. Nonetheless, what happened in Germany in the 1930's as a result of the yoking of science, technology and the state is an extreme example of what the rebels in the play are reacting against.

On a lesser note, Dobelle reacts against Tausch's romanticism. Tausch the practical man romanticises not only the material effect of the new industrialism, which will "redeem" Ireland from "the sordid trivialities of peasant life" (109), but also romanticises the attitude of mind, of intellectual freedom,[4] that results from material prosperity. He states:

> Do not please think that I am preaching the doctrine of material prosperity. That matters nothing. It is here, in the brain, that we find all that is of any value. It is the change of mind that only power can bring that will be the justification for all my work here. (109)

The "doctrines of material prosperity" that Tausch does indeed

preach are here elevated to the spiritual: material prosperity will convert the masses to the values of a new technological age. Ireland will be a "happy nation of free men". Tausch's unrestrained enthusiasm is not only the result of an intellectual commitment but also an irrational belief in "progress". Tausch's ideals and romantic aspirations for the new age are dangerous because for him the ends not only justify the means, but also the means in themselves become the end of his doctrine and the endeavors it generates.

Although they do share their profession, Dobelle's character (in almost every aspect) is in dialectical opposition to Tausch. Tausch is most impressed by Dobelle's career: he is proud that he is now the neighbor "of the man whose works . . . [he has] studied for so many years" (100). Dobelle, well-educated and certainly successful in his chosen field, has "built railway bridges anywhere from Hungary to Gran Chaco" (101). Like Tausch, as a young man he too was an idealist, serving "Righteousness with that intense desire for service that one has in one's youth" (101). Subsequently rejecting his service to "Righteousness", the distinguished scholar and railway engineer of international repute has returned to Ireland to live in near seclusion, amusing himself with toy trains and the Encyclopaedia. Dobelle's return has been initiated by a moment of "revelation", one learns as the play progresses, related to the death in childbirth of his wife Mary, and to the realization that Ireland is his spiritual home. Dobelle's moral and spiritual nihilism is complemented by his emotional withdrawal. Blaming his child, Blanaid, for the death of her mother, he has entrusted her upbringing and education to his sister, Columba. His rejection of Blanaid is at times active and cruel. Tausch's kind, friendly interest in Blanaid is an admirable and

ironic contrast to Dobelle's unsympathetic and hostile attitude towards the girl, which is dramatically exemplified by his refusal to accept her gift of the Girl Guide diary that was given her by Darrell Blake. Dobelle is a dispassionate observer of the events that unfold in the play and his objective analysis and denunciation of Tausch's belief in progress engage our trust; nevertheless, Dobelle's treatment of his daughter, one of several of the play's sub-plots, only serves to alienate us. Although he is certainly a spokesman for the playwright, he is, significantly, not a completely appealing character; at times, indeed, he is far from it. His relationship with Blanaid and his belief in wrong are actualizations of and a morbid variation on the theme of romanticism permeating the play. In his own way, Dobelle, the objective analyst, is staging his own, one-man revolt against the immutable realities of his life and as the action unfolds, his rejection of reality proves as futile as does that of the other characters.

Darrell Blake is a far more appealing character than Dobelle and his actions are meant to be seen as a foil to Dobelle's renunciation of the world. While Dobelle is a disillusioned romantic, cynically convinced of the inevitable corruption and hopelessness of life, Blake is a type of Byronic hero, playing at the game of "Revolution" and half in love with death. Both Blake and Dobelle are similar in appearance--refined, sensitive, highly strung--clearly having something of the imaginative sensibility of artists. The character of Blake exemplifies the conjunction of art and politics: throughout, he is engaged in a performance in which his actions distance him from his role as rebel leader. As a politician, he sincerely believes in the necessity to react against a government that has made a mockery of the ideals of the

revolution, but as an artist he has an ironic perspective on his actions and an understanding of the inherently contradictory nature of his dual role. William Irwin Thompson comments on the perceptive insight of the artist-politician:

> To live out his role the politician must believe or pretend that the next revolution or piece of legislation will make a difference and that the difference is worth living and dying for. . . . The artist with an older sort of wisdom knows better. . . . he sees that the revolution that is to bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat will bring about the dictatorship of the exproletariat.[5]

Blake throughout the first two acts of the play engages in a self-conscious parody of himself and his "enemies". His speech is saturated with allusions to literature--Dante, the Bible, Aquinas--giving it the lyrical grace of poetry. Nevertheless, Blake must be taken seriously as a revolutionary. Despite his charming manner and his making a game of blowing up the Works, Blake is sincere in his active revolt against the Free State Government and industrial development. In creating a revolutionary who is an artist figure, Johnston is appropriately imitating life: Irish history is rife with the hero who blends romance and reality, as did Padraic Pearse, the paradigm of the revolutionary in modern Irish political history. Pearse, poet and rebel leader, not only romanticized the cause of Irish insurrection, but shaped it and elevated it to the level of the mythic and sacred. In Pearse's almost wholly subjective response to the political situation of Ireland prior to 1916, death was perceived as a sacred act of martyrdom and bloodshed as "cleansing and sanctifying".[6] Blake's character is a variation on the theme of the revolutionary romantic that was to be more completely developed in The Scythe and the Sunset. Whereas Tetley of The Scythe is a totally

committed romantic modelled largely on Padraic Pearse, Blake's self-consciousness complicates his romantic involvement somewhat. He is deadly serious in purpose but, at the same time, knows he is playing a game. In the dialectical structure of the play, however, his romantic idealism makes him the "man with the idea" opposed to his counterpart Lanigan, "the man of action", whom ironically he is responsible for bringing into the revolutionary movement. Not only are Lanigan and Blake dialectically contrasting characters, they can also be seen as two sides of a single character, Blake representing the intellect and Lanigan the will. Their split personality exemplifies the split in Irish society and politics after independence in 1921, when a strong and vociferous minority rejected the terms of the treaty with England. Lanigan, who has become a member of the Free State police force, has compromised. accepted the treaty and the new Ireland: he is a political realist in comparison to the romantic idealist Blake.

In a sense, however, his killing of Blake is a revolutionary act. As he says, "I was a rebel once. What I've done was war then. Now I'm on the other side and it's murder . . . (and further) . . . I've always been taught that it's not words but deeds the country needs, so I'll go on doing what I can, no matter" (150). As a physical force man, he has dispensed with forms of law and justice and used guerrilla tactics to maintain civil order. Through Dobelle's negative reaction, we see that Johnston does not condone Lanigan's action, but nevertheless, recognizes its necessity. Tausch must learn in the course of the play that in the advent of a new order, the "birth of a nation is no immaculate conception" (152). In supplying power for the barracks, Tausch is personally implicated in the Irish political situation: he must accept

that death is the price of his adherence to "righteousness".

Tausch's entrance into Dobelle's dwelling is an entry into an Irish "Heartbreak House"[7] where the old order, that of traditional Ireland, is fast disintegrating; it is a process represented by the chaos of the stage setting, with its books, blueprints, fishing tackle and toy trains contributing to an effect of "shocking disarray". Issues or themes to be discussed in the play are symbolically represented, or at least hinted at, by the setting. The Dobelle household occupies the officers' quarters of an old fort and remnants of its military past clutter the set anticipating the violence of the revolutionary drama which is about to unfold. The disorder of the room, besides representing the present political and social state of Ireland, exemplifies the eccentricities of its inhabitants and the idiosyncratic relationships of the Dobelle family, and in particular, the estrangement of father and daughter. The sound of the turbines, which can be heard "whenever the hall door is opened", is an auditory signal of the impact of international industrialism.

As the first act opens, Agnes, the servant, an enormous full-bodied, domineering woman, is laying the table. She introduces the subplot of the drama, the birth of the Mulpeter baby, and also embodies a primitive or elemental life force in her superstition-laden lament for the suffering of childbirth. Her rugged but unimaginative practicality causes her to disregard her appropriate social role while admitting the visitor, Tausch. Later on, she is unquestionably dominant in relation to her son, Willie, and his revolutionary activities are of little significance to her. Early in Act I, Johnston cleverly uses her speech to satirize her as a stereotype of the ignorant and superstitious Irish

peasant and, by contrast, Tausch as a punctilious technocrat, the prophet of the new industrial age. The Works, which are to Tausch a symbol of man's capacity for power--both real and potential--are to Agnes merely "clattering mechanicalisms", a nuisance "driving the blessed sleep from . . . [Mrs. Mulpeter's] . . . poor tired eyes". Moreover, her malapropistic use of language and lack of respect for Tausch's authority, for he is, after all, socially and economically her superior, and a guest, are an appropriate introduction to the atypical and disorderly Dobelle household. As well, Agnes is a type of Cathleen ni Houlihan, a strong, earthy, peasant woman, whose humorous simple-mindedness, vitality and assertiveness undercut the various posturings and perspectives of the other characters.

The purpose of Tausch's visit is to meet Dobelle. Tausch attributes Dobelle's return to Ireland as a love for his homeland and "the conclusion--that . . . [his] . . . own place is the best after all". Tausch, the practical man, thinks one can become acquainted with the true nature and charm of Ireland or any country by taking a course and, having done that, is susceptible to the "call of romance" and the "charm of the West". Tausch's judgment is superficial and romantic, based as it is on his own sentimental feelings for his homeland.

Tausch is blind to the reality that the farcical pair, George and Captain Potts, who have entered "drunk and disorderly" and given us the scenario of typical Irish humour, are, in their sentimental grief and general ineptitude and disarray, an integral part of the "charm of the West". Dobelle has renounced the world because it "maddens" him, but returned to Ireland, one assumes, not because it is any less mad; rather, because he has no illusions about a nation of Georges and Captain Pottses,

who "may believe in fairies" but "who trade in pigs"--a nation where reality is clearly seen to be irrational. As the exchange between Tausch and Dobelle continues, the German perceives that Dobelle's retreat is spiritual and smugly makes reference to China, an ironic allusion to the title of the play as a romantic aspiration to the life of the spirit or imagination. One assumes he is interpreting Dobelle's renunciation of the world as a contemplative or mystical withdrawal. But Dobelle has renounced the spiritual, and utterly rejected the moon in the Yellow River, a symbol for the romantic delusion of Irish patriotism.

Tausch says (smiling), "I suspect Mr Dobelle that you visited China as well as the Gran Chaco". Dobelle's retort again juxtaposes Tausch's idealism and the life of the spirit against an image of unremitting coarseness:

> I suppose every cock crows loudest on its own dunghill. Here it is still possible to live on one's own mind. Even if usually it proves a mighty poor diet. And speaking of diet, I did ask you to supper, didn't I? (102)

The images of defecation and auto-cannibalism effectively undercut Tausch's pretensions to insight about what might motivate his neighbours. In addition, they epitomize Dobelle's cynicism and hard-edged pessimism concerning man's potential for virtue in an evil world, and Dobelle's own lack of spiritual purpose. Although Dobelle's world view is at the very least purgatorial, if not hellish, the mood does not darken to despair due to the entry of Columba, who cuts an absurd figure, protectively wheeling her bicycle through the living room.

Columba's hostility towards Tausch is rendered humorously; nevertheless, it focuses on what is ostensibly the major theme of the play, the rejection of international industrialism, that is, "the Works",

by a group of local inhabitants who are clandestine republican revolutionaries. It seems Columba is not directly tied in with a political organization, that is, with Willie and Blake; however, she has spent time in jail and is actively subversive, composing and distributing revolutionary propaganda. Her role both recalls and corresponds to the historical role of women in Irish revolutionary politics; like Emer of The Scythe, she is a kind of Countess Markievicz or Maud Gonne.

Because of her eccentricity, one doesn't take her protest against the works too seriously; however, it does anticipate the entrance of the armed revolutionaries, Willie and Blake. And although Columba's idiosyncrasies are treated lightly, her extreme regard for her possessions, in particular the bicycle, and the affair of the mowing machine, are ironically played against her political stand fully articulated later in Act II. As the play progresses, we are forced to take her seriously. She is against man's dependence on the machine which will forever alter his lifestyle and values, and against the man who controls the machines, thereby controlling men. Tausch does not anticipate or fully comprehend Columba's and Blake's rejection of the advent of modern industrialism in Ireland and the alien technocrat, ". . . with a small technical education and with neither culture nor religion to guide him", who might unthinkingly impose his will upon the majority. Tausch, a man who believes in order and hence in the predictability of human behaviour, is misled by his own superficial and illusory judgment of the Irish. Although non-violent, Columba is part of a socio-political environment where eccentricity, political anarchism and violence, deliberate or otherwise, appear to be the norm. Columba, Willie and Agnes represent the innate irrationality of the Irish, creating a dialectical tension between their irrational

inefficiency and Tausch's righteous belief in the supremacy of order. The romantic, irrational impulse to rebel in Ireland is institutionalized in the I.R.A. As Dobelle says: "In most countries the political idealist is merely a bore, but here he has the disconcerting tradition of action. He usually has his own government and his own army as well, you see" (104).

Tausch's reply--"you mean to say that he does not recognize the machinery of democracy?"--reiterates the motif of order and the machine. Tausch's yoking of the machine and democracy tends to dehumanize the state, reinforcing the gap between the revolutionaries and the present government of Ireland symbolized by Tausch's works. Once again, we are also reminded that Tausch sees human behaviour in mechanical terms, as rigid and controllable. Moreover, human industry and initiative, when directed towards production, are valuable for their own sake; for, despite its ominous potential, George's gun immediately gains Tausch's admiration and respect. Tausch says, "Of course it is not the application I admire. I am not so materialistic. But the spirit--the praxis--it is an example" (107).

Human intelligence when manifested in technological achievement is here divorced from morality, inasmuch as the gun is an instrument of human destruction and, of course, is ironically the eventual destroyer of Tausch's powerhouse. Tausch's faith in the harnessing of the human spirit in practical endeavor obscures any ability he might have to perceive apparent or real danger resulting from the practical application of Schiller's dictum that "freedom cannot exist save when united with might" (109). Indeed, Blake's rebellion (like Lanigan's murderous action) is an enactment of Schiller's logic which is dangerous in its reduction

of human values, hence, human behaviour, to simplistic and amoral terms. From Tausch's point of view, it is the legitimate use of power (that is, the "freedom" to harness electrical power) which will transform and redeem Ireland "from the sordid trivialities of peasant life to something newer and better". Tausch does not stop here, however, but continues in heightened and lyrical language:

> Soon you will be a happy nation of free men--free not by the magic of empty formulae or by the color of the coats you wear, but by the inspiration of power--power--power. And on that day, I shall say in the words of Horace . . . . (109)

Tausch's hymn to power (with biblical intonations and biblical and classical allusions, by which he raises it to the sacrosanct) is abruptly interrupted by the entry of the masked gunman, Willie. Willie's entry ironically deflates Tausch's romanticization of Schiller's credo and Tausch's belief in Ireland's potential for order and material prosperity. Dobelle's dark and prophetic warnings that Ireland holds ". . . vampires . . . that feed on blood and bear bombs . . . .", and that ". . . in the mists that creep down from the mountains you will meet monsters that glare back at you with your own face. . . ." (109) begin to be fulfilled.

Silence and an economy of language and movement maintain an initial tension while the characters, in particular, Dobelle, grope for appropriate phrases and gestures. Intense suspense is created by Blanaid running out of the room as it seems for a moment she is in danger of being shot by the gunman. The tension dissipates with the entry of Agnes and her recognition that the gunman is her own son Willie. At an exceedingly swift pace, the play has moved from excited expectation, climaxed by Tausch's speech on power, to great intensity and from that to

comedy. Agnes' comical indignation about her dirty floor immediately undercuts the seriousness of the revolutionary threat. Willie's "military business" becomes a source of amusement: threatened violence that held all in suspense just moments before has been completely reversed and, in a comic routine worthy of the music hall, Dobelle accuses Agnes of being violent in her reaction to Willie. In response to his mother's scolding, Willie comically speaks the theme of the play when he says to his mother, "That's right. Now, violence never did any good, Ma. You know that" (111). Furthermore, Dobelle and Willie's prolonged discussion about the payment for petrol underscores the naïveté of the supposed revolutionaries, who also seem absurdly inept. Because the discussion is prolonged, the comedy moves from the merely amusing to the farcical and slightly surreal. From the point of view of the dialectic between Tausch and Dobelle, the scene exemplifies the transcendance of Tausch's belief in the machinery of power by human relationships. The warmth and liveliness of the characters' relationships underscore, then, the harshness of Tausch's philistinism and, by contrast, make him seem slightly repulsive.

At this point in the action, Darrell Blake, the revolutionary in command of the operation, enters, "with great grace and charm of manner," and, rather inappropriately, unarmed. His sardonic, almost satirically humorous manner matches that of Dobelle and both, in fact, treat the occasion as little more than a social call. Blake asks for a drink and responds flippantly to Tausch's anxiety by parodying himself as a man of action. According to the rebel, Tausch rather than a thinking man, should be ". . . a man of action like Blake . . . ." Blake goes on to describe himself as "terribly dangerous, I assure you. You should see the blood I've spilt in my time!" (114).

The dichotomy which Blake has set up, the man of ideas against the man of action, applies of course to Blake himself; he is not the man of action but, ironically, the man of ideas. Blake is an intellectual rather than a physical force man, and again, he is a poet or artist figure (his name surely an allusion to the pre-Romantic poet, William Blake). Moreover, in this confrontation between Tausch and Blake, a central irony of the play is introduced. Blake frivolously names Revolution as his reason for blowing up the power house. In response to Tausch's disdainful dismissal of revolution as "just a word", Blake replies: "A beautiful word. So few people appreciate beautiful words nowadays" (114). Despite naming revolution as his motive and force as his method, he parodies his role and mocks Tausch's concern. He romanticizes revolutionary political action by what he says: there is no doubt that he is an actor in a drama of which he is the creator. Both from his perspective and from Johnston's, his revolution is a creative act. Nevertheless, here, his sardonic manner detaches him sufficiently from what he does and says to indicate his awareness of the paradoxical nature of the role he has cast himself in, and its inherent difficulty.

Nowhere has the futility of violent insurrection been better exemplified perhaps than in Ireland, where Willie's cry, "UP THE REBELS!" (114), has resounded in some form or another throughout a history of foreign conquest and domination. The use of force compromises the idealist; he usually ends up playing the oppressor's game. Thus, as Robert Brustein says, the "ideal of revolt remains pure and absolute, but the act of revolt is usually a source of tension, suffering and despair."[8] Nevertheless, The Moon rarely darkens to despair; instead, despair and violence are almost completely inverted whenever they are hinted at in the

play, as in the case of Agnes' recognition of Willie which deflates the threatening possibility of violence.

Against the background of an absurd atmosphere where the irrational takes precedence over anything reasonable or predictable, Tausch seems to be the only character taking himself seriously at the end of Act I. The curtain comes down on Tausch feverishly attempting to phone the military aided and abetted quite naively by Willie, whose obliviousness is a source of considerable comedy and again a mockery of Irish inefficiency. Willie's and Blake's intentions to blow up the Power House can hardly seem threatening in the face of such naïveté.

The play shifts from the fairly rapid pace of excited dialogue and movement of Act I to a subdued (by contrast) Captain Potts and George entertaining Blanaid with an amusing reminiscence of life at sea. The setting has moved from the interior of the Dobelle residence; however, the untidiness of the room--a store for the Coast Life Saving Service and a "dumping place" for the Dobelles' belongings--echoes the chaos of the Dobelles' living room. On one side of the room the gun's shells, "four polished projectiles", stand on a workman's bench and they and the gun act as a magnet drawing the principal characters in one by one. The initial scene with Captain Potts, George and Blanaid is a set piece, a quiet interlude, which momentarily diverts us from the other characters and the conflict between Tausch and Blake. George and Potts' anecdote and Blake's presentation of the diary to Blanaid are by turns amusing and touching.

The tempo of the dialogue is conversational and realistic, the language for the most part commonplace; however, Blake's characteristic religious diction gives his speech a lyrical grace and romantic intensity

markedly different from the speech of the other characters. For example, as he hands Blanaid the diary he tells her: "I want to atone for my past with a present" (119). In addition, his continual allusions to religion (initiated by the blessing of the decanter in Act I) are humorous and self-conscious mockery, an explicit reminder that he is educated, thoughtful and aware of the implications of his idealism and of his revolutionary role. Columba's remark from Act I, which overlaps with the action of Act II, that the "proud and their pride shall be laid low" (119) is heard momentarily, echoing the religious tone of Blake's comment to Blanaid. Although Columba is not self-conscious as is Blake, her religiosity exemplifies the Irish cultural context and the religious zeal of the Irish revolutionary movement in general. In addition, the religious and classical allusions in speech, particularly Blake's, intensify the mood of the play: this tendency towards the surreal "alienates" us from the romantic ideals motivating the revolutionary characters.

Moreover, the juxtaposition of Tausch's bourgeois sensibilities and its correspondingly mundane speech with Blake's lyrical and romantic lines underscores the dialectical contrasts between the middle class reactionary and the romantic rebel which gain an even greater intensity as the action continues. Blake's intention to use the gun to play a great joke on Tausch as well as his exuberant elaboration of the planned destruction of the works reveal that Blake's motives while sincere are secondary to his impulsive desire for the romantic gesture. In this instance he is certainly the artist creating a revolutionary scenario, "a cat and mouse game" that is fantasy rather than reality. The running account by George and Potts of the gun's workings, about which it is plain Blake is totally ignorant, is a comic counterpoint to its underlying threat,

both in a real sense (it is after all a potential danger) and as a symbol of the end result of industrialism. The handling of the projectiles, the carrying out of them one by one, is also farcical, the high point of the farce surely when Willie drops one, causing all the characters to head for cover unnecessarily, as the shell does not explode, displaying typical Irish incompetence from all points of view.

At this point in the play, the characters, especially Blake and Tausch, intensify their debate concerning man against machine. Throughout their exchange, Johnston sardonically plays on the motif of the machine; for example, Blake tells Tausch he hopes that ". . . [he] is a foeman worthy of [his] . . . steel", and goes on to impress upon Tausch the horror of the invasion of industry into Ireland while in the background George and Potts conduct a comical course of inquiry into the possible flaws in the gun and its shells. Rejecting Tausch's concept of progress, Blake refuses to have the Irish turned into "a race of pimps and beggars" by Tausch's "ludicrous machinery". Totally opposed to Tausch, Blake's definition of progress is:

> If man has anything to boast of that the ant, the bee and the mole haven't got, surely it's his greater capacity for enjoying life. To me it is progress just to live--to live more consciously and more receptively. Herr Tausch, do you never see yourself as rather a ridiculous figure trying to catch life in a blast furnace? (127)

Blake's speech on progress cleary defines him as an aesthete, a romantic who sees Ireland, as Dobelle states near the end of the play, as "Hesperides --the garden where men may sleep", a land of shadowy waters" wherein Blake can live out a dream or vision. Blake's visionary aestheticism is reinforced when he says to Tausch: "I am Persephone, weary of memory, putting poppies in my hair" (131). Moreover, in associating Tausch with

the blast furnace, Blake evokes an image of Tausch as a kind of comic devil. Although staid and guileless, Tausch is cast in the role of demon --a Mephistophiles to Blake's Faust--offering physical ease or "progress" as payment for Ireland's soul. Reinforcing the view of Tausch as a demonic god, Blake refers to him as a "demon pantechnicon driver" who would bring his world into "new quarters" (131) and, jokingly, he refers to Tausch as saying: "'Let there be light', And the evening and the morning were the first day" (128). But Ireland is immune to Tausch's order for, as Blake says: ". . . here we believe that the dawn will break in the West. You bring us light from the wrong direction" (128).

Blake sees Tausch's vision of Ireland as a circle of hell, peopled by "dirty workmen" who are shackled by the machine rather than freed by it as Tausch is, a description of the proletariat echoed during the mock court martial of Tausch by George, the Christian Communist, who sympathetically recounts his response to the palefaced factory girls of Birmingham:

> All those women and young girls having to work night and day, with their poor, pale, pasty faces that they have to make up with rouge and all that, brought tears to my eyes, old man. They ought to be kept out of doors and have proper homes of their own, you know. No life for young girls. (135)

The court martial occurs in response to Tausch's demand for a democratic hearing; it is, moreover, a method of continuing the debate and discussion which Tausch has encouraged in order to divert Blake while waiting for the police. In drawing the characters together for the mock trial, Blake again uses religious diction blended with legal terms and phrases. He says:

> Dearly beloved . . . Our German brother stands indicted before the bar of this Court on the gravest of charges. He has outraged the sacred person of our beloved mother--Cathleen ni Houlihan . . . . (133)

The scene which Blake, the high priest of revolution, orchestrates has a chimerical quality as the illusions and misguided loyalty of the characters are ironically revealed. Willie, having taken an oath, ". . . to obey . . . [his] . . . superior officers and not to recognize the Government until the country's free" (134), admits that destroying the works might harm the country but that building them up again would solve the problem of unemployment, a ludicrous rationale completely missing the point of Blake's intentions. In joining the I.R.A., Willie, totally ignorant of the implications of his actions, has entered upon a revolutionary game which can end only in death and destruction. George, too, finally exposes his part in the game of revolution. Having extolled the virtues of fresh air for the Birmingham factory girls, hence choosing the green fields of Ireland over technological progress, George is horrified at the prospect of actually using the gun. George, the Christian Communist who "wants everybody to be free and happy and at peace," and who has supposedly built the gun to effect his political views, reveals that the gun-building was a hobby-horse to be ridden for its own sake and that he cannot bear to have the fruits of his four years of labour "blown up in a flash". George is only by default truly a Christian Communist. That he and Potts in their chaotic bumbling are really agents of destruction is apparent, however, when they disclose the tragi-comic circumstances surrounding the death of Potts' wife who drowned after being thrown overboard in a fog into several feet of water. Potts' retelling of the incident is humorous and matter-of-fact. Maggie was

found "floating a cable or two off Salthill. The wrong ways up" (129). In the context of the juxtaposition of the rational and the irrational, Maggie's death is totally irrational, and shocking because unnecessary. Although humorous as an anecdote, the incident parallels Blake's death inasmuch as both deaths appear to be absurd, because meaningless from a humanistic perspective. Again, the anecdote interjects a note of the surreal into the realistic texture of the play.

The comic characters, Willie, George, Potts and Agnes, are realistic representatives of "mother Ireland" (juxtaposed to Blake's idealized, sacred Cathleen ni Houlihan) and form a matrix of low comedy which culminates in the court martial; in addition, they represent the Irish people whose "democratic will" appears to be quixotic and irrational. The self-elected speakers for this proletariat, which is by turns comic and maddening in its blind confusion, are Blake and Columba. It is Columba who most succinctly articulates the concerns of the anti-machinists. She has no objection to a factory but sees the Power House and what it represents as a threat to modern civilization:

> Some people, I know, are inclined to scoff at the significance of Power Houses and to dismiss them lightly as just a small matter. But it is those very people who before they realize it have become dependent on the very thing they tried to laugh off. They think that they can give them up at any time. But they never can . . . Now once you become dependent upon anything, you are the slave of the man who controls it. Expected to bow the knee to some place-hunting industrialist with a small technical education and with neither culture nor religion to guide them. And if anybody thinks I am going to do that he is very greatly mistaken. I will not be dominated or controlled by anybody. . . . (134-5)

Dobelle's perspective on Tausch is different: he respects the sincerity of Tausch's motives but is convinced that Tausch's belief in progress is deluded and dangerous. He says:

> You wish to serve something you call progress. But progress--whatever it is--is never achieved by people like you who pursue it. Progress is the fruit of evil men, with sinister motives. You and your kind can only make misery. (138)

In his attempt to communicate the necessity of evil, he joins Blake in alluding to Aquinas:

> Aquinas tells us that in order that the blisses of Paradise may be more delightful to them the blessed in Heaven will be expected to view the tortures of the damned and to rejoice. (138)

Even in Heaven evil has its necessary role.

At this point in the action Lanigan enters and Blake, the poet-revolutionary, like the unicorn to which Blake has just compared himself,[9] "a lonely, chaste and noble beast in many ways very like myself" (138), is doomed to extinction. More crucial, of course, is that the unicorn is Ireland in the struggle against England (referring to the Royal Arms over the fireplace Blake describes "the eternal struggle of the Gael with the Gael--of the lion with the unicorn"), for the latter is a creature of imagination, myth and fable. Its association with Blake reinforces his asceticism and attachment to romantically idealized traditional values.

Blake's antithetical double and executioner, Lanigan, with his "pale saturnine face and sunken cheeks" and his "expression of haunted melancholy", is inadvertently romanticized by Johnston. Johnston's description of Lanigan is of an archetypical gunslinger; nevertheless, Lanigan means business and as a "practical revolutionary" is the agent of Blake's destruction. The final scene of Act II is the climax of the dialectical contrast between the romantic idealist and the man of action. The debate between Tausch and Blake over international industrialism is subsumed in the working out of the revolutionary conflict. In effect,

Blake is confronting his double, his anti-self, a monster of his own creation who has crept down from the mountains and now stares back at him with his own face. Blake's contempt for his Frankenstein, Lanigan, "this bile green clothes-prop" (140), can be interpreted as a form of self-hatred, a romantic melancholy fuelled by disillusionment.

Blake, the romantic pessimist, and Lanigan, the cold political realist--juxtaposed in the dialectical structure of the play as opposing versions of the contemporary Irish patriot--form a composite portrait of the Irish revolutionary of nationalist myth which is universalized in Blake's final romantic gesture. Rather than have Blake die singing "The Rising of the Moon", for example, the vortex of revolutionary action expands and encircles all revolutions, all revolutionaries with the use of Pound's lyric "Fu--I Loved the Green Hills".

The visual pattern of sky and landscape contained in the poem and the typically expressionist chiaroscuro effect created by the juxtaposition of light and dark in the image of the moon in the Yellow River evoke a pattern of metaphorical associations begun with Tausch's mention of China in Act I and reinforced by Blake's periodic references to China, which become increasingly explicit. When he suggests in mock seriousness that he play the Chinese National Anthem (141), the international implications of the revolutionary theme are emphatically underscored: the political theme is once again universalized by the pattern of allusions and images. Even more significant, however, is the suggestive, ethereal and dreamlike quality of Blake's responses to Tausch. They are not only evocative and surreal (in contrast to the realistic context) but also signal in their mystical fervor the extent of Blake's withdrawal from the representational world of the play.

The poem's landscape is the psychic or interior landscape, the land of Shadowy Waters, into which the romantic hero withdraws. Again the link with Li-Po and China universalizes Blake's withdrawal and his state of mind. Moreover, his drunkenness allows for and underscores his intense subjectivity. Blake becomes the drunken poet, Li-Po, and reveals the slightly hallucinatory state of mind of the romantic revolutionary, the rebel-artist, which Blake has been engaged in becoming in a kind of existential struggle throughout the play.

Moreover, just as the poet, Li-Po, has died drunkenly embracing the reflection of the moon in the Yellow River, a romantic vision of beauty, Blake dies for a veiled abstraction symbolized by the reflection of the moon in the Yellow River. The myth he and Willie embrace in their revolutionary game is the sacred vision of Ireland as the beautiful Cathleen ni Houlihan, the four green fields of Moore's ballads. In reality, she is the mistress, death, whom, in a foreshadowing of his own death, Blake has toasted moments before. "To death, Herr Tausch, that makes the whole world kin . . . There's nothing cruel about her . . . Quite the reverse" (129).

As the action continues to his death, Blake's speech consists of a cluster of images evoked by references to Nietzsche's Zarathustra, Li-Po, China and Nero--objective correlatives of modern self-consciousness, art and the imagination, and conversely, corruption, betrayal and death. The use of multiple allusions at this point in the action creates an almost hallucinatory effect. The technique is expressionistic as Johnston induces a dream-like quality of dissociation through the pattern of Blake's speech which is at odds with Tausch's impatient demands for a reasonable response from him.

Interjected at Blake's last moment is Tausch's remark: "This is no country! It is a damned debating society! Everybody will talk--talk--talk--" (142). Tausch's remark is an ironic counterpoint to the murder which will follow and an imposition of the political debate that has been overshadowed by Blake's final performance. Blake's last line of dialogue is replete with, characteristically, not one, but several allusions: to Li-Po, Nero's betrayal of Rome and to the role of Blake as artist. Blake unwittingly speaks his own epitaph: "Qualis Artifex pereo". (Whatsoever artist I am, I perish.) The synthesis of inaction and action is dramatized in the shooting of Blake. Lanigan's action stuns all the characters and creates a moment of stillness and silence as Blake sinks into a "blessed martyrdom". Wulstan Phillipson comments on the ending of Act II:

> few curtains [are] more effective than at the end of Act II in The Moon when Lanigan shoots the drunken Blake in the back as he plays and sings at the piano: the whole tragedy of Free Stater and Republican . . . seems to be epitomised and starkly revealed as it is in O'Casey's death of Bessie Burgess in The Plow and that of Johnnie Boyle in Juno. A terrible beauty is born in each of these climaxes.[10]

In the surreal context of Blake's imagination, his death is elevated to an apotheosis of a mystical quest for infinite repose. He is indeed--"Persephone, weary of memory, putting poppies in [his] hair". But in the thematic social and political context of the play, it is meaningless. The final image of his execution does not transcend this harsh reality. He is an Emmet who has died for nothing and without the histrionics and ritual that surrounded Emmet's execution which could at least be elevated to myth. At the end of Act II, the characters and audience are left staring into the void. In this respect, Blake's revolt is existential and his death absurd because meaningless. He is a

frustrated messiah carrying on an inherently romantic quest in a world of abandoned gods and utterly and ironically defeated, not only by his physical death, but by its brutal nature. Even on a realistic level, Blake's death is "sobering and disgusting". The counter-murder of prisoners by the Free State government, as Johnston states in the preface to the play, succeeded; and he gives a crucial reason when he adds: "Nor did the glamour of patriotic martyrdom attach itself to the victims" (82).

Johnston's structuring of the play with Blake's death occurring two-thirds of the way through reinforces the intense meaninglessness of Blake's death. Life resumes much as it had before in Dobelle's living room. Columba fusses about her roller skates and the incident of the mowing machine, both rather unsuitable concerns for a person who is anti-machine. George and Potts lament the loss of their gun while Dobelle plays with his electric trains. Blake's death becomes a part of the cycle of vengeance that will carry on between Irregular and Free Stater as Lanigan prepares to dodge Willie's bullet in the back. While not condoning Lanigan's action Dobelle sees that it is inevitable and necessary to maintain the Government and ensure industrial progress. Dobelle says to Tausch: "I hate him. I hate him like poison. If I were to see him hanged, whenever I turned on your light I should feel more sorry for him than for my friend Darrell Blake" (152).

For Lanigan, as "Tausch's finger on the trigger", has acted to preserve the new order imposed by Tausch and the Free State government which supports his particular brand of philistinism. In the epistomological process of the revolutionary dialectic, Lanigan's killing of Blake exemplifies the extreme of the politics of might or power. As Blake's "doppelganger", Lanigan embraces his fate as executioner of Blake who is,

in a sense, his second self. The inspiration and brains of the movement, Blake has been the initiator of a chain of actions which has led to his own death and the probable assassination of Lanigan. Both men, then, are Faustian in their impulse to destruction and true rebels in the metaphysical framework of the play, the tautology of insurrection. For although Lanigan's action is ruthless and condemned by Dobelle, it is necessary as an act of war; moreover, as an extension of the politics of 1921-1922, Lanigan is merely holding up his end of the revolution. While Blake is self-conscious, he is partially deluded; whereas Lanigan, as Dobelle realizes, is completely self-aware. Blake's "creative act" of rebellion is a romantic gesture against the inevitable; Lanigan has embraced the inevitable and necessary. Thus, both men have courageously played out their roles in a game that can end only in death.

Tausch, still deluded, believes that he and Blake could have reached some understanding but, as Dobelle points out, Blake belonged to a world that would have been destroyed by Tausch:

> You'd always have been disturbing the waters with your machinery and drowning his moon in mud. No, in the end you would either have had to kill him or to give up your fight. You remember--he who establishes a despotism and slays not Brutus abideth but a little time. (152)

In the concluding scenes of the play, Dobelle takes on Blake's role as visionary and continues in a dialectic with Tausch who reaches no insight into the irrational norm, the paradox of Irish politics which is a microcosm of the struggle between reactionary and futurist fundamental to the new age of technology. Tausch, ever the proselytiser, says: "I see what you are at, Mr. Dobelle. You wish me to believe that Lanigan's shot was part of my world--that he and I are truly on the same side" (153).

Tausch's response to Dobelle's insistence that Lanigan is just himself, his "finger on the trigger", is that "all guilt must be avenged on earth". Tausch fails completely in the course of the action and debate to see that guilt can never be avenged without perpetuating a cycle of bloodshed. Lanigan's act has its own brutal honesty and integrity and is a necessary act of war to preserve the Works which we discover are Tausch's final purpose, "greater than the life of man", because they represent "the future of humanity" in a universe where everything has a purpose: "The great river is there--the granite pier--the navigation lock--the turbine house beside the slag heap" (155). And in a moment of perfect ironic deflation the last remaining shell thrown on the slag heap blows up the Works, sending Tausch into hysteria. Like the bumbling devil he is, he dashes off to a corner of his comic Inferno to inspect the smoking, scorched heap of ruins.

With Blake gone, Dobelle dominates the third Act; more important than his debate with Tausch is the resolution of his cynical despair. The political debate becomes explicitly metaphysical as Dobelle assumes the role of "metaphysical rebel." His reading of The Inferno feeds the language of the last act creating a symbolic context in which he expresses his conviction that evil and the irrational must be confronted.

His recounting of the incident in which his uncle shot the horse underscores the absurdity of human existence where events do not occur in accordance with benign Providence but rather in accord with an incongruous order dictated by a capricious lady of Fortune. The dialectical opposition of good and evil must be considered in the context of the constant possibility of "the supremacy" of the irrational. To the

extent that it cannot be imposed (particularly in Ireland), Tausch's belief in the supremacy of order is a myth. In the ideological or political construct of the revolutionary dialectic, the actions of the I.R.A. will continue to frustrate the efforts of those politicians and industrialists who would impose the political, social and economic order of international industrialism on Ireland. Dobelle's anecdote of his uncle's horse exemplifies a complete inversion of accepted order and like Blake's death is surreal and absurd. Unlike Tausch, Dobelle accepts the irrational and sees that Blake's death is merely the logical extension of Tausch's belief in "righteousness."

Conventional morality and Christianity are instruments of "right" as is Tausch's belief in technology but lead to the sacrifice of life for religious principles and modern progress.

> Dobelle: I'm not against their religion. I am against their rightness. It is right that a woman should die so that a child's immortal soul should be saved from Limbo, therefore I say that I am against right. It is right that men should murder for the safety of progress. . . . That is why I am against right and believe in wrong . . . I believe in evil and in pain and in decay and, above all, in the misery that makes man so much greater than the angels. (146)

Therefore, in Johnston's view Christianity fails in any satisfactory manner to resolve the problem of good and evil. There is no synthesis: no supreme goodness comes out of their antithetical opposition. Rather, the bliss of Paradise is intensified by a view of the damned--an image of an irresolvable paradox.

Nevertheless, Dobelle's stark cynical view of the universe is mitigated and made bearable by a moment of epiphany, which culminates in a rebirth of love. Quoting Dante's ejaculation to Beatrice, from The Inferno, "ah, Bice--la Dolce Guida. . . . take away this cursed gift of

laughter and give us tears instead",[11] Dobelle turns and sees whom he perceives initially as his dead wife Mary on the stairs. It is in reality Blanaid, who, hearing the explosion of the Power House, has come down to investigate. In a moment of insight he finally accepts Mary's death, forgiving Blanaid for the death of her mother. Moreover, Dobelle's final utterance on good and evil is one of acceptance and an explicit statement of a metaphysical view that recognizes a universe dominated by equal forces of good and evil. It is his acceptance of evil that constitutes his metaphysical rebellion. Years later in The Brazen Horn Johnston wrote:

> The widespread Zoroastrian concept that assumes a conflict between Darkness and Light . . . becomes a basis of a Theology --that Evil is at war with Good. In actual fact there is no conflict of any kind between Light and Darkness, which merely complement each other. Nor, for the matter of that, is there any more of a struggle going on between Hell and Heaven as there is between Winter and Summer.[12]

Moreover, in Johnston's Manichean universe evil is a positive force inasmuch as man's unhappiness is, in part, due to his consciousness. Dobelle says to Blanaid in the closing speech of the play: "And yet isn't it unhappiness that makes men so much greater than the trees and flowers and all the other things that can't feel as we do? I used to thank the devil for that and call him my friend" (157).

In the earlier version of the play (first published in 1932), Johnston's final judgment is one of utter despair and darkness: ". . . a life has been destroyed . . . we've put out the light and left the world in darkness . . . Death and Darkness--No, there's no curing that, I'm afraid."[13] True enough, in the initial version, as in the revised version, the final action of the play is Agnes' entrance and opening of the

shutters signifying rebirth; nevertheless, Dobelle's speech leaves no doubt as to Johnston's predominately pessimistic theology in 1932. In the later version of the play, however, Johnston has softened his doctrine of "death and darkness" and partially reconciled the natural, Dionysian force of Agnes with Dobelle's cynical despair. The formerly fatalistic certainty of the dominance of evil is more muted (in the later version) in which Dobelle's assertion becomes a question:

> Darkness . . . death and darkness,
> Ah, can anything cure them? . . .
> I wonder. (158)

Although there is no resolution to the conflicts--either political or moral--the dialectical process is subsumed in Dobelle's acceptance of the necessity of evil and death. Through Agnes, an emblem of fertility, the natural cycle of death and rebirth absorbs, at least momentarily, the cycle of vengeance and Dobelle's nihilism. For it is Agnes' ritualistic opening of the shutters signifying the birth of the Mulpeter baby that we are finally left with--an act of epiphany that transcends the lack of an intellectual synthesis between good and evil, life and death. In Johnston's universe, as portrayed in The Moon in the Yellow River, any other kind of resolution is impossible.

CHAPTER III

THE REVOLUTIONARY DIALECTIC IN THE SCYTHE AND THE SUNSET

Like The Moon, The Scythe and the Sunset is a discussion play dealing directly with the Irish political situation in an historical context. It, too, is an Abbey play, although of a much later date (it was first produced at the Abbey in May, 1958) and, thus, is primarily in a realistic mode. The revolutionary dialectic evolves from an insurrectionary situation in The Moon but is gradually absorbed into a predominately psychological and metaphysical context as Dobelle articulates his views on the problem of good and evil; as significant, of course, is his acceptance of Blanaid and the self-revelation it affords. Hence, the plot of The Moon is complex--and in effect, the play's various sub-plots become primary towards the end of the play. This complexity of action does not exist in The Scythe. The play chronicles the Easter Rebellion of 1916, the insurrection which instigated the revolutionary movement culminating in the establishment of the Free State government in 1921.

At the time Johnston wrote the play (1958), O'Casey's The Plough and the Stars was still the definitive dramatic statement on 1916. While both plays are critical of the attitudes and ideals of the revolutionaries of 1916, The Plough is an intensely emotional, visceral and at times passionate depiction of the lives of Dublin tenement-dwellers during Easter Week, intimately detailing the impact of the rebellion on their daily lives. In contrast, The Scythe is a much more objective,

dispassionate and sardonically funny treatment of the revolutionary situation. More intellectual than is O'Casey's play, The Scythe is a dialectical critique of the role of the revolutionary and the consequences of revolutionary activity in twentieth century politics. Both The Moon in the Yellow River and The Scythe and the Sunset examine the character of the revolutionary; however, in the later play the exploration of character and motive is more detailed and complex. In his political drama, Johnston is consistently a more detached, more analytical observer than is O'Casey.

In his Preface to the play, Johnston tells us that the purpose in writing The Scythe (its title a deliberate parody of The Plough and the Stars) is to give a view of 1916 deliberately contrary to O'Casey's anti-war perspective. Johnston describes the relationship of the two plays from this point of view:

> Neither in verbiage, plot nor sentiments, does this play of mine presume to bear any relation to its magnificent predecessor. The only point in so titling it lies in the fact that The Plough is essentially a pacifist play, implying that if only man had 'a titther o'sense', these outbreaks of destruction and bloodshed would not occur. As a quiet man who, nevertheless, is not a pacifist, I cannot accept the fact that, theatrically, Easter Week should remain indefinitely with only an anti-war comment, however fine.[1]

Johnston goes on to describe The Scythe as anti-melodrama, because it questions a traditional, romantic view of revolutionary politics in which the rebels are romanticized as inherently noble, representing the forces of virtue, and in which the established government, reacted against, is oppressive, hence evil. In the process of de-mystifying the role of the revolutionaries in 1916, Johnston examines, in detail, their motives and aspirations. The subsequent portrait of his

revolutionary characters' reasons and rationale for participating in armed conflict is complex, dispassionate and realistic as the characters respond emotionally and intellectually to self-imposed conditions of warfare. As a drama of ideas, the play revolves around the revolutionary dialectic, primarily from an ideological perspective in the juxtaposition of arguments either for or against revolutionary action with a chorus of characters who express differing opinions and points of view, variations on the dialectical theme. As in The Moon the characters' various points of view concerning the rebellion provide a consistently shifting perspective that is ironic and comic. Characteristically, Johnston uses farce and comedy to ironically dramatize the ineffectual posturings of the characters who espouse a romantic point of view.

Despite Johnston's criticism of the myth of revolutionary martyrdom created by the aftermath of 1916 (in which the Irish revolutionary leaders were summarily and brutally executed by the British), he does not intend "to debunk 1916". As he says, in objecting to the popular and highly subjective Irish accounts of 1916:

> . . . it is far from my intention in this play to debunk 1916--a stupid accusation that I am glad to say is more generally made by those who have never fired a shot in anger, than by those who have. Whether or not we hold that the actual fighting was widespread or of first-rate quality, we must agree that the affair, on the whole, was a humane and well-intentioned piece of gallantry. And the more one sees of how these uprisings have since been conducted elsewhere, the more reason everybody has to be pleased with Easter Week. In those days nobody had much experience of warfare, or of what would be likely to occur if the British Army were challenged in open rebellion for the first time in three or four generations. Nowadays, there is hardly a corner of the globe that has not got plenty of data on the subject, but we must not forget that the Irish Volunteers were the first to try. For this reason alone, the Republicans must be credited with considerable courage in taking the field at all . . . . (91)

Thus, the courage and actions of those men and women who rebelled against the British in 1916 are finally not rejected in the play, because to do so would be tantamount to taking a pacifist position; rather, it is their motivation that is held up for scrutiny. Johnston's rejection of pacifism is a conviction born of his experience: war and acts of war, although perhaps evil, are necessary in the context of social and political reality. This view is expressed in Nine Rivers from Jordan, Johnston's autobiographical work on the Second World War (published in 1953). The following is part of a dialogue which Johnston creates between two characters--himself and a priest--delineating the dilemma of war in very simple terms. The priest has pointed out that men on both sides in a war are victims to the extent that they are cast in roles dictated by their national governments and do not act out of a choice between good and evil:

> D: (Johnston) . . . If War hasn't got a right and wrong side to it what business have we in killing each other at all? . . .
>
> HO: (Priest) I'm not trying to justify it. War is a curse that man brings down upon himself through Evil . . . [and further] . . . Mortal man can't refuse to fight anymore than he can refuse to suffer under any other affliction. . . .[2]

Thus, in going to war, man is caught in the web of historical necessity and acts out of a mixture of motives, neither totally good nor evil. Moreover, Johnston feels that since death is inevitable, it must be accepted--whether or not one is shot to death in a war or dies in bed is immaterial.[3] In Johnston's universe death and violence are inevitable and not to be feared, either intellectually or metaphysically. Therefore, one can see Blake's death in The Moon and Tetley's and Palliser's deaths

in The Scythe as lamentable but at the same time as essential events in Johnston's metaphysical system. In part, due to Johnston's refusal to romanticize the moral choice between good and evil, and life and death, his drama has the resonance and depth of psychological realism.

While The Moon deals with the tensions between the I.R.A. and the Free State government, a historical reality, its revolutionary situation nevertheless is an imaginary scenario of what might have occurred had an insurrectionary assault on the Shannon Hydro-Electric Power plant worked. Conversely, The Scythe and the Sunset deals directly and accurately with events that actually occurred during Easter Week, 1916. The Irish political situation at the end of the play is also placed in an international context: Johnston uses his character Palliser to make the point that the Irish Rebellion is the beginning of the military decline of the British Empire, the first step in "the passing of an imperial civilization".

> Palliser: . . . Ireland's only the start. We're going to go on winning every war, but piece by piece we're going to give it all away--not because we're licked, but because we're bloody well bored . . . It won't be the first time that people like you have loosened the foundations of a civilization. . . . (165)

Giving the Irish situation an international dimension contributes to the universality of the themes and issues discussed in the play. The dialectical contrast between realist and romantic, "the man of action" and "the man with the idea", is played out on the stage of Irish political history but we are reminded that the scenario is enacted elsewhere in different contexts, which, in their essential components of idea (motivation) versus action, are universally similar. In addition, where men meet each other in violent confrontation, all actors in the

drama are compromised because each ends up playing the others' game. Johnston states in the Preface in characteristically paradoxical fashion:

> It is not an Irish but a world phenomenon, that the man who loses is often the man who wins, and each side usually expends as much energy in playing the other fellow's game as it spends in furthering its own. (92)

At the height of confusion in Act II McCarthy asks: "Whose game is everybody playing? It's painfully obvious . . . that nobody knows whose game is what" (136), introducing a major motif of the play. This theme is crucial in The Moon. Both Tausch and Blake are deluded by romantic ideals into "playing the other fellow's game". Twenty-seven years later, Johnston has refined and concentrated the dialectic of the deluded romantic again in a larger revolutionary situation in The Scythe: moreover, the action of the plot now centers on a single predominant theme yielding a spareness and cohesiveness of form and structure not found, for example, in the earlier Moon which is far more diffuse in theme, form and structure.

The revolutionary scenario or plot holds no suspense in the play--the entire action is a kind of flashback which, rather than being a reinterpretation of events, is an accurate recreation of them. Nevertheless, the drama is tense, credible and effective, occurring through the revelation of character in a dialectical confrontation within the historical framework. This is not to minimize the action of the plot in which Johnston attains a straightforward texture of realism. Rather, the achievement in the play is the melding of the intense and rapid movement of the dramatization of Easter, 1916 with the heart of the drama, the discussion between Tetley the revolutionary and Palliser, the soldier, by means of which the characters move from a state of illusion

and deluded idealism to self-knowledge and a realistic evaluation of their motives.

Although predominately realistic in style and form, the play manifests Johnston's characteristic mixture of styles particularly when characters' idiomatic speech patterns change into an expressionistic incantatory style. In addition the play is expressionistic inasmuch as Johnston is interested in and successful in revealing individual characters' states of mind. It is not so much what they do--and they do a great deal in the course of the action--but, rather, what they think and say that is of greatest significance in the play. The dramatic tension of the play is achieved primarily in the effective juxtaposition of the characters' differing points of view on violent revolutionary action (the major substance of Acts II and III) and their response to the necessity of violence and death in an extreme situation. In the unfolding of the last two Acts, Johnston achieves through the epistemological process of confrontation and debate not only historical or literal reality but psychological realism as the characters respond to the worsening situation and impending military defeat. The dramatic tension, then, arises out of the psychological (rather than physical) combat between Tetley and Palliser; in this confrontation their roles or positions in the debate subtly shift and, finally, reverse. The crucial issue which they and, in particular, Tetley, must come to terms with is the one which Robert Brustein aptly describes (in another context) as "the crucial dialectic of the modern drama", that is, the conflict between idea and action, between conception and execution.[4] As the characters progress through their maze of self-delusion the periodic movement between realism and surrealism underscores the dialectical theme.

Indeed, the "mixture of styles" manifested in The Scythe resembles the melodic method of The Old Lady in which form and language are influenced by musical design and composition. Incantation and poetic speech function as formal motifs, much as a recurring melodic phrase does in a musical work, and these surrealistic, expressionistic choruses (which resemble vocal, even sung interruptions) appearing in a representational drama place the physical actuality of realistic action in relief, isolating the speech and behaviour of characters. An alienation effect is thereby created. The interjection of expressionist dialogue, in which Roisin, Endymion or Maginnis reveal essential themes and subjective truths or simply comment on the action, forces an objective evaluation of the revolutionary characters in the act of creating their revolution, that is, in the process of becoming revolutionaries. The dichotomy of dramatic form in this way exemplifies the dialectical tension between subjective and objective truths. The man with the idea in the process of engaging his ideal must become the man of action. He must embrace his "doppelganger" in the process of self-discovery in order to become self actualized.

Just as Lanigan is Blake's double in The Moon, Tetley finds his double in Palliser and in his gradual realization of the necessity of death in actualizing his ideal, embraces Palliser's pragmatism, his belief in the realistic and the practical. But the relationship between the two men is doubly dynamic in that Palliser the anti-revolutionary, also experiences the pain of self-discovery and in the end engages in a kind of metaphysical and moral rebellion, in which he imitates his own double, Tetley. In effect, they play each others' games, both politically and metaphysically. As early as Act II, Endymion--herald, Fool,

soothsayer, seer--versifies the fundamental themes and issues of the play; he fortells the eventual end of the struggle between Tetley and Palliser;

> The issue's knit.
> -And every fellow plays the other fellow's game.
> The Green makes murder and the Crown makes martyrs.
> And the great and unwashed Liberated loot.
> Victory's the Crown, my friends, for him
> With the least power to engineer his own defeat. (123)

Aside from what occurs off-stage, the action of the play, Tetley and Palliser's psychological warfare, is confined to a single set, the main room of "an unpretentious restaurant known as The Pillar Cafe" located on Sackville Street, which later becomes O'Connell Street, Dublin's principal or main street along which is located the Post Office, the Bank of Ireland and other important buildings. The dismal and dirty cafe scene reflects the lower class segment of Dublin's society and its environs, while the so-called "Latin air"--the flags and posters--very simply but effectively place the sleazy Dublin setting in an international context reminding us that the action about to unfold is contemporary with the World War raging in Europe. Moreover, the flags, cartoons and religious emblems are subtle, symbolic references to the revolutionary military action about to take place and, in addition, the emblems hint at thematic implications of that action, that is, the British involvement, the religious fanaticism, and the romantic bravado that propel it forward. The use of a single, self-contained set which physically confines the characters, metaphorically dramatizes the psychic as well as physical confinement that warfare engenders. Moreover, the characters are caught in a kind of temporary hell, which resembles at its most claustrophobic Sartre's hell of <u>No Exit</u>--from which there is no route of escape and in which these characters who are hostage to the revolutionary

situation are forced in their confinement to re-examine and analyze their actions and motives in an atmosphere of emotional intensity heightened by their proximity to one another.

The characterization of The Scythe's revolutionaries who create this temporary "hell" is partially modelled on several of the actual persons and personalities who organized and led the Easter Rising, including Padraic Pearse, Joseph Plunkett and James Connolly. Padraic Pearse, lawyer, teacher, poet, mystic revolutionary and martyr, read the Proclamation and by the week's end was fully in command of the rebel forces, finally surrendering as their commandant. Tetley plays the role of commandant and eventual martyr as did Pearse, but, although dedicated to a romanticized ideal of nationhood, he is not a poet, nor is he given the mystical cast that Pearse no doubt affected. Rather, O'Callaghan is the poet-revolutionary, "exotic, striking, with pistol and sword", who in behaviour is highly strung and "over-dramatic". He, moreover, has the "high color and burning eyes" of an invalid, coughing frequently. In all respects, his character is deliberately reminiscent of Joseph Plunkett, the university teacher and poet who left his sick bed to join Pearse, MacDonagh (another poet) and the other volunteers in the fight. Williams, who was clearly involved in the labour movement, is thereby associated with James Connolly, leader of the Irish Citizen Army, the armed contingent of the Irish labour movement. His contempt for the volunteers, as expressed to Maginnis--". . . If it wasn't for us in the Labour movement, the Volunteers would still be forming fours . . ." (107)--and his lack of enthusiasm at the reading of the Proclamation exemplifies something of the split between Connolly's Citizen Army force and the Irish Volunteers led by Pearse; the two groups only joined forces at the last

moment in planning the insurrection and had different objectives and ideals.

Emer is the female counter-part to the male revolutionary, in particular, Tetley, and is one of Johnston's "killers". As Johnston points out in his preface:

> . . . the women of Ireland ever since the Maud Gonne era have been the most vocal part of its militancy . . . when it comes to the point--both my women are killers. (86)

Palliser calls her "quite a killer" towards the end of the play, echoing Johnston's remarks. Emer is, of course, the queen to Cuchulain, the warrior king of Irish history and legend; Johnston's Emer, who has deliberately taken the name, personifies and acts out the warrior ideal of Irish nationhood. This ideal is an integral part of Pearse's ideal of the hero expressed by him through the character of Cuchulain in his Cuchulainn Pageant.

> Better a short life with honour than a long life with dishonour . . . I care not though I were to live but one day and one night, if only my fame and deeds live after me . . . .[5]

In fact, in The Scythe the idea of heroism examined by Johnston is that molded by Pearse and expressed by his revolutionary heroes and heroines: together they create a composite of the revolutionary hero in action and idea as envisioned by Pearse. F. X. Martin writes in Leaders and Men of the Easter Rising: Dublin 1916:

> [Pearse] molded a new ideal, the Irish Hero, a man who exemplified the virtues of Cu Chulainn and the mythological heroes of ancient Gaelic Ireland, who was modelled on Christ in self-abnegation, suffering, death and ultimate victory, who had the verve and unbending determination of Wolfe Tone, John Mitchel and Thomas Davis, who was identified with the Fenians and the common people of Ireland long-suffering under the harrow of English domination.[6]

Moreover, it is crucial to note Pearse's view on bloodshed within the context of Ireland's insurrection which, for Pearse, was a holy war and therefore justified. To Pearse, bloodshed ". . . (is) a cleansing and sanctifying thing, and the nation which regards it as the final horror has lost its manhood. There are many things more horrible than bloodshed: and slavery is one of them."[7]

A number of elements in the play are emblematic of the romantic ideal of the hero and Irish nationalism expressed by Pearse, who was eventually canonized in the Irish national consciousness as the chief martyr and saint of the rising: Emer's ferocity exemplified by her firing of the machinegun, and her refusal to surrender at the end of the play; Tetley's "far away look" and his acceptance of martyrdom; O'Callaghan's melodramatic guise, gestures and costume (including slave bangle); and Maginnis' metamorphosis in battle. In addition to the ideal of Irish freedom, the goal of independent nationhood, chiefly expressed by Tetley, the dimension of the labour struggle is included in the revolutionary ethos of the play, through the agency of Williams, who sympathizes with the looters, and dismisses the bourgeois sensibilities of the other revolutionaries--"The bourgeois mind. Not one of you understands the poor" (126). Williams' relative maturity (he is in his 40's), and his appearance as a stout mustachioed man armed with a revolver, also gives an impression of stalwart, no-nonsense efficiency borne out in his initial violent and hostile treatment of Roisin and Maginnis. His appearance and behaviour is in marked contrast to those of Emer, Tetley and O'Callaghan, who together exemplify the romantic ideal of the revolutionary hero. Like Lanigan, Williams is the practical man turned revolutionary. At the very outset of the insurrection his realistic

response to the political situation put Emer and Tetley's motives and attitudes toward the revolution in question.

The characters of MacCarthy, Endymion and Palliser are juxtaposed to those of the revolutionaries in the context of the revolutionary dialectic, which in The Scythe is most clearly defined in the debate between the idealist and the man of action, the political ideologue versus the political realist. Interwoven within the discussion of the means and motives of revolutionary action, is an eschatological argument concerning death, the eventual fate of the revolutionary, which intensifies the conflict between Tetley, the ideologue and Palliser, the man of action. Palliser, the professional soldier, is Tetley's opposition in every way. Tetley's amateur zeal is contrasted to Palliser's professional detachment, which is probably the result of breeding and training. Palliser is the representative of the Irish ascendancy class, that is, an Anglo-Irish Protestant gentleman, an officer in the Irish Lancers, which is a regiment of the British army on Irish soil. In the course of the action, Palliser ends up "playing the other fellow's game", not out of any rational or reasoned analysis of principles but, rather, in an angry confrontation with Emer, because he loses control of his reason in an attempt to save "face". The conflict between Emer and Palliser exemplifies Johnston's belief that in the end men act primarily out of a desire to save face rather than from logical motives. As he states in the Preface:

> The fact is, that . . . men do not act from logical motives as often as they act under the promptings of the urge . . . --this thing that the Orientals call "face". (92)

Even Palliser, Johnston's spokesman for much of the play, is

caught up in the web of emotional conflict generated by the insurrectionary situation. Palliser's role, however, is primarily that of an ironic self-conscious commentator on the revolutionary action, the operations of Tetley and his colleagues. His reading of William Blake and constant sardonic allusions to the poet place his analysis of the revolutionaries' motives in a more universal context than simply that of the contemporary Irish political scene, invoking the dimensions of the Blakean universe and of the romantic hero within that universe. Associations with Blake enrich the revolutionary motif and theme, suggesting that the actors in the dialectic are not quite what they seem. In general, Palliser's comments are satiric counterpoints to action, shading and coloring our response to the totally committed revolutionaries. As the play progresses, however, Palliser becomes increasingly implicated in the violence generated by the insurrection despite his attempt to remain "the voice of reason."

In contrast, both MacCarthy and Endymion are richly comic characters who embody the characteristically Irish matrix of irrationality and humour in the play; moreover, they are constant foils to the revolutionary game through their roles as commentators on the action. Endymion in particular, is a Fool in the Shakespearean tradition, functioning as a choric character throughout the action. Both Endymion and MacCarthy have their counterparts in reality. Endymion is apparently based on a true character who frequented the streets of Dublin;[8] MacCarthy is representative of the professional classes in Johnston's social mosaic and his attitudes towards sex and marriage seem typical of those in a conservative, repressive society, which through his comic dialogue is satirized in the play. MacCarthy's absolute indifference to the political

struggle is characteristic of the Dublin populace in general. In fact, MacCarthy's chief interest is keeping himself supplied with liquor to do which he risks the bullets of the British and insurrectionaries. His behaviour is heightened to provide a comic contrast to the deadly serious revolutionary leaders.

MacCarthy's sardonic humour, expressed in witty one-liners, sets the initial mood of the play which opens shortly before noon on Easter Monday, 1916. The first scene of exposition introduces us to the principal characters (except Palliser); its humor draws us into the Dublin scene with subtle foreshadowings of the entrance of the armed revolutionaries. Rapidly and economically, Johnston not only gives us factual data, but in the process something of the flavour of Dublin, largely through the earthy working class speech of Roisin and, secondarily, Maginnis. In some scenes, the play achieves almost documentary realism. For example, in several brief interchanges between characters we learn that the city is closed and all are holidaying either on Kingstown Pier: "Wild Thyme is blowing now on the banks, and the officials are at large, airing their tots on Kingstown Pier" (96), as McCarthy says, or off at Fairyhouse, viewing the annual Easter races. Time is told by the Angelus, symbolizing the predominately Catholic culture and religious context, just as Maginnis' Gaelic salutation signals very subtly the assertion of Irish nationalism, a major focus of theme. Roisin's disappointment at having Maginnis upset their holiday plans all for nothing, as it turns out, is spoken in an expressionistic incantation which economically yields a full and complete picture of Dublin. In addition, the speech achieves a cinematic effect in the sudden shift to her point of view; her perspective "pans" as it were, the city from

Fairyhouse to Pine Forest.

> An' out comes the sun,
> Te warm the jarvies on the jaunt te Fairyhouse.
> An' buckets an' prams on Merrion Strand.
> An' chizlers feedin' ducks in Stephen's Green,
> Or peddlin' their way up te the Pine Forest.
> But once he has me spancelled te the sink
> Where are yer man's minoovers now?
> Like tealeaves--up the spout. (98)

Her incantatory speech, a series of brief statements which express her state of mind and momentarily isolate her, creates an alienation effect forcing us to respond critically and objectively. In the structure of the ideological argument for and against revolution waged and dramatized in the play, both Roisin and Maginnis represent the working class, and during much of the play Roisin, in particular, undercuts the revolutionary ardour of Emer and Tetley through her negative response to the rising. She tells Maginnis: "Ther's no playin' at wars for this Judy. It's hard labour for me" (98). Her impatient ridicule of Maginnis' voluntary activity is a relatively mild expression of the contempt and hostility felt towards the Volunteers by the majority of Dubliners, an antagonism which was most marked during the rising. Roisin is, moreover, a type of Kathleen ni Houlihan, who functions like Agnes, the figure in The Moon, as a satiric comment on the hallowed symbol of Irish nationalism. McCarthy calls her "dark Rosaleen", who is the symbolic rose of Irish nationhood; however, like the Old Flower Woman of The Old Lady, her role as national symbol is inverted. As a modern Kathleen ni Houlihan, her expression of the political consciousness of the Dublin populace is ironic within the context of nationalist myth, and juxtaposed with Emer's minority point of view, which, of course, is ironically idealistic in the context of the political reality Roisin

represents. Like many in the vanguard of a revolution, Emer, a nurse, is middle-class, and is in the position of having to convert those around her. Both Roisin and Emer are strong characters whose blunt sarcasm contrasts with MacCarthy's humour. The comedy is a deceptive prelude to the revolutionaries' entrance which signals an abrupt shift of mood. As the play is retrospective, MacCarthy's comic banter creates an air of gentle suspense.

During the first scene of the play, comedy reaches its high point with the entrance of Endymion who causes MacCarthy to throw a milk jug over the side of his face. In moments of slapstick comedy MacCarthy is transformed from sophisticated fool to clown and the atmosphere of the play is heightened and transformed to the surreal. As choric characters, he and Endymion are foils to one another, MacCarthy being the sane counterpart of his insane patient. Despite his absurd, ridiculous appearance, Endymion's first utterances are not only perceptive comments on the action but acute and complete statements of the theme. He states his function in Act II:

> Someday I shall be heralded by horns.
> Enter Endymion--Chorus to these large events,
> Coming to limn the progress of the off-stage scene. (122)

As he says, he is a link to the off-stage scene, a vehicle through which those confined in the cafe learn of the larger events surrounding them. Furthermore, Endymion's reportage is accurate unlike the miasma of rumor and innuendo that convinces the revolutionaries they are succeeding in the first half of the play. For example, William's comments in Act II are untrue:

> We've taken three more barracks, and there's a German submarine out in the bay. Men from the country are pouring in every hour. (125)

Nevertheless, this speech accurately represents the false rumors that sped the hopes of the revolutionaries during the actual rising. Endymion not only undercuts the other characters' pretensions to insight, but his dress, particularly his ankle cuffs, is an allegorical representation of the "Blakean realm" of paradoxical truth, where appearances are illusory inversions of reality. Like O'Callaghan, he carries a sword, but in an absurd jumble of sticks and umbrellas, a fantastic creature in a bowler hat and an old fashioned formal suit. He is appropriately dressed for one of the "pleasant little parties" out at MacCarthy's place, "The Little Flower Refuge for Nervous Complaints" where Emer supposes the guests are indistinguishable from the patients (102), introducing a minor motif generated by Endymion and MacCarthy, which is that, in a world of contradictory realities, the sane and insane are indistinguishable. Moreover, their constant interjections of farce are part of the continual juxtaposition of the comic and the serious, a satirical counterpointing of tone undercutting the revolutionaries' high seriousness.

The comedy of the first Act is reminiscent of The Old Lady with its multiple allusions to the Dublin scene in MacCarthy's ongoing commentary. Offering to show Emer the city, his speech approaches a stream-of-consciousness recitation concerning monuments to Irish history and culture, debunking in the process the myths created around him. Neither O'Connell nor Lord Nelson escape his irreverent wit.

> --- O'Connell begins it in person. To the left--our Liberator, standing on his pedestal, surrounded by his large illegitimate family, looking out over the water. Next we come to the effigy of a nonentity who is said to have brought the water-supply to

> Dublin . . . a memorial to an unknown plumber and here, to the right, between us and the public urinal, presiding over the entire vista--Lord Nelson . . . a one-eyed English sailorman with an eye for only one thing. . . . (103)

His earlier comparison of O'Connell Street to the Nevsky Prospect is doubly ironic. The Liffey and O'Connell Street suffer by comparison, in purely physical terms, to the grandeur of the Nevsky promenade and its river; moreover, the association with the St. Petersburg Street is an ironic (and anachronistic) allusion to the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917, the latter far surpassing the Irish rising in magnitude and in historical and political importance. Ireland is, instead, a "land of saints and cemeteries that laughs at nothing but itself, and where even the route marches to glory never come off" (101). Nevertheless, the reference to the Nevsky Prospect and MacCarthy's metaphorical remark that Roisin is "Marie Bashkirtseff behind the samovar", parallels the Irish revolutionary activities with those of Russia, once more taking the theme out of and beyond its purely Irish locale. What is more, the subtle allusions to the Russian revolution hint at the insurrection about to commence, which when it does happen astonishes MacCarthy and deflates his Falstaffian "joie de vivre". MacCarthy weakly comments on events occurring outside the windows of the cafe, informing us of the takeover of the Post Office in stunned, elliptical speech:

> . . . Swarming into the Post Office . . . breaking the windows, and turning the people onto the street . . . [and further] . . . About a hundred men with a cab. Yes, I saw a cab too. And a couple of drays filled with pikes and guns. No. I saw nothing. (104)

With the entrance of Williams and Tetley the change in tone and atmosphere is complete. MacCarthy no longer dominates the action and his

banter merely punctuates and ironically points the intensely grave actions and speech of Emer and the rebels. Williams' threatening movements towards Roisin exemplify the seriousness of the intentions of the rebels who have in reality created a state of war by their civil insurrection. The choric characters--Roisin, Maginnis, MacCarthy and Endymion--now function as commentators in a dialectical process which dominates the second and third acts.

O'Callaghan's and Palliser's entry on the scene completes the exposition; their contrasting appearances are a visual metaphor of the dialectical debate which is to follow. In Lancer's uniform and with a "clipped military moustache", Palliser is clearly the professional soldier. O'Callaghan, on the other hand, is so romanticized that he is a caricature of the dashing figure he wishes to play. Poet turned soldier, he is the artist-revolutionary hero who creates his role and stages a performance--with scarf, sword and "enormous pistol and a hanging holster"--a Byronic, "Flyboy Fuselier". By the end of Act I it is clear that the revolutionaries are toy soldiers playing at war. Tremendously excited at the routing of the Lancers and naively engaged with the game of war, O'Callaghan scolds Roisin: "This is war, girl. War!" (111). But, it is clear that O'Callaghan is a gentleman-knight rather than a desperado or gunman. Palliser, the real soldier, curses his hurt leg and is sternly told by O'Callaghan not to swear in the presence of women, a hint at his delicacy and sensitivity that is laughable under the circumstances.

Moreover, O'Callaghan treats Palliser with concern and courtesy strictly in accordance with the rules of war--there is a comic dispute as to whether it is the Hague or Geneva Conventions. The point is, of

course, that O'Callaghan's conception of war is conventional and romantic. A comic and satiric touch to his treatment of the prisoner is his offer of a cigarette, a gesture reminiscent of the last puff given in popular literature or Hollywood film to the enemy before he is shot or hanged. O'Callaghan's expectation of honourable behaviour from the prisoner also exemplifies his belief in playing by the rules, and his knowledge of the conventions of conduct in war is contrasted to his ignorance of the machine-gun's workings. Tetley's hope that Ireland will sit down at the peace conference and his comparison of his cause with that of the allies is similarly undercut by an inability to use the machine-gun. As Tetley says, this army is unorthodox. Its lack of skill is matched by disorganization which is exemplified by Maginnis' orders not to mobilize from the Chief-of-Staff. Both the lack of popular support and the disorganization give the rebels little chance against the English. In fact, the Irish rebels' best chance for success lies in the mobilization of men such as Maginnis, who have neither the passion of Emer nor the convictions of Tetley, but nevertheless some idea of how to use a machine-gun. MacCarthy astutely observes later in the play that "Mixer is the real military genius" (121), while Palliser and Tetley are merely role playing in their chosen occupations. Tetley, however, in his role of leader convinces Maginnis to fight. Maginnis is also rather brutally taunted and goaded by Emer ("You have your chance now, Maginnis. Are you going to take it, or are you what that girl called you--a Mickey Dazzler?" [115]), reinforcing her characterization as a "killer".

As the first act ends, the atmosphere of chaos and extreme excitement generated by a war-time situation with its attendant civil, social and psychic disorders is broadly outlined in the intense and

emotional actions of the characters. As MacCarthy has coolly observed, what is being witnessed during the reading of the Proclamation is "The Birth of a Nation"--echoing Dobelle's comment in The Moon--"the birth of a nation is no immaculate conception." Inside the cafe, Maginnis, Tetley and O'Callaghan mobilize for action while outside the scene is chaotic as Roisin describes it:

> The chizzlers is all over the street eating sweets from Noblett's. The women are dancing jigs in Talbot Street. I've never seen the like in all my born days. (115-116)

Both MacCarthy and Palliser are sardonically detached from the chaos--MacCarthy continually humorous and quite ready to take advantage of the disorder by looting along with the mob. MacCarthy and Palliser greet the insurrection with annoyance; moreover, MacCarthy carelessly facilitates Palliser's phone call to headquarters, an action reminiscent of Tausch's phone call at the close of Act I of The Moon. In both instances the action of the plot is crucially influenced by the initiative of the counter-revolutionaries taken because of the carelessness, ineptitude, and naïveté of the revolutionaries. As Palliser points out to Tetley and Williams, who are, as far as he is concerned, civilians trying to play at soldiers, they "don't even know enough to occupy the phone exchange", and so through their lack of skill allow the English to maintain their line of communications and easily surround the rebels, quickly pushing them to a dénouement of defeat. Dismayed by the British use of artillery on the Quays, Williams is ready to surrender the following day:

> We started it to make a public protest--not to force the workers to commit suicide along with us . . . . (133)

But, to Tetley, the insurrection is a revolution, that is, a full scale

military operation which risks full reprisal. It is apparent midway through the second act that the rebels are losing and that their surrender is the most reasonable course of action. Tetley is not only confused, uncertain that surrender is the best course of action, but also disillusioned with the lack of support from the people he is seeking to liberate.

> . . . I'd fight to the last building and the last man if I was sure of only one thing--that I was fighting for my country and for my people, and not just for my own satisfaction . . . It's their [the people's] hostility that's really shaken me--not any question of whether we are going to win or lose . . . Do I have to pretend to myself that I am another Jesus Christ--that everyone's wrong except me? . . . (139)

It is clear to Tetley at this point that the political goals of the rising are frustrated; thus he questions his own motives. In the discussion which follows, between Tetley and Palliser, both men's motives are, in the process of examination, reduced to simplistic and personal terms. Palliser, the professional soldier, does not enjoy fighting and is dedicated to peace, while Tetley, who hates evil, wants to fight it to express "the purpose" of his life. Moreover, according to Palliser, the rules of war are not sacrosanct as Tetley wants to believe. Indeed, as Palliser says:

> The whole art of war is to know when to break the rules intelligently. And it has nothing whatsoever to do with being either an officer or a gentleman. The fact that you don't know this, classifies you--both socially and professionally. (141-2)

In adding the dimension of class to the argument, Palliser further complicates the analysis of motivation; this, moreover, indicates a certain loss of control which anticipates his assistance to Emer in firing the machine-gun. Palliser means to counter Tetley's misguided

nationalism with realism and common sense; both men, however, are motivated in part by the desire to save face. Tetley has experienced the emotional release, the excitement of being in combat and says disparagingly to Palliser:

> Your profession is quite terrifying, Captain--it's so simple. It requires no special qualities, except an indifference to one's personal fate that I find rather pleasant . . . [and further] . . . I found since yesterday that soldiering gives one a great feeling of release--especially when you're bound to be beaten. I suppose that's why so many stupid people make a success of the Army. It doesn't require much courage to be shot at. (142)

Nevertheless, although Tetley does not relish martyrdom, he will not be saved by Palliser, nor will he repudiate the revolutionary cause which gives his life meaning.

Stunned by Tetley's refusal to see reason, Palliser has clearly understood the danger of making martyrs out of the rebels, enunciated in his exchange with Clattering ("Let's march them through the streets without their pants, and ship them off in a cattle boat to their friends --the Huns" [128]). Palliser, however, begins to act in part out of an irrational desire to save face and also because he now perceives Tetley as dangerous and wants the battle to continue in order to defeat the rebels. Tetley, the son of an Englishman, is, ironically, set to destroy Palliser's Ireland: as Palliser says to Emer, ". . . he wants to destroy most of the things that my country means to me . . ." (145). In an ironic reversal of roles, Palliser becomes the patriot; however, Palliser's nation, the Anglo-Irish ascendancy, is doomed as is the British empire. Both Palliser and Miss Garrity ("an ole Loyalist in black bombazine with a picture of King Teddy on the whatnot") represent values that are extinct. Miss Garrity's playing of contemporary pieces functions as a

musical counter-point or motif setting the action in the period and, moreover, is an objective correlative, symbolizing the graciousness of Edwardian England, a period finally destroyed by "the loosening of the foundations" of British civilization.

Palliser, convinced that "life is much too complicated to define a purpose", nevertheless believes in the order and forms of that civilization which civil insurrection on a global scale is busily destroying. What Palliser clings to and eventually dies for, in part, is a nostalgic appreciation of the old order--the pomp, ceremony and aesthetic values of British civilization. In his own way, Palliser is an "idealist". Angered by the irrationality of the rebels, however, he in turn acts spontaneously and irrationally in typical Irish fashion and by fomenting the rebellion contributes to the destruction of that order. Clattering comments: "Scratch a Paddy and you're all the same, no matter what uniform you're wearing" (128). Palliser simply acts from what Johnston terms "this thing the Orientals call 'face'". It is not unconvincing that individuals should respond to emotional urges; for, in the play, the values of the old British order are expressed in extremely superficial terms to this point, and seem inadequate as a justification for Palliser's former cool detachment.

In the exchange with Clattering, the only other British soldier in the play, the conduct and mores of the British army are reduced to the ridiculous and the banal. Palliser, who, as an Irishman, has a "reasonable" and perceptive apprehension of the political situation, is unable to impress upon Clattering the potential seriousness of full reprisal by the British. While Johnston achieves a certain realism in the theme--the British were indeed stupid in their dealings with the Irish--he fails to

provide a more balanced view of what the British, and Palliser, stand for in the political dialectic of the play. By contrast, at no time do the rebels become small minded or ridiculous.

On the other hand, as a character, Palliser is wholly engaging and sympathetic, although alienated from the army he supposedly represents. Palliser, moreover, like Grattan of The Old Lady, is the voice of reason in the play. His commentary and insight fuelled by the reading of Blake's Marriage of Heaven and Hell ("Blake says that if the Fool would only persist in his folly, he would become a wise man" [144]), Palliser, for example, perceives the irony of Endymion's fate. For Endymion (like Dotheright in The Golden Cuckoo) is a comic Christ-figure, "a hero and a lunatic," who has given his sanity to save a man drowning in a Guinness vat. Both Endymion and Dotheright defy reason but are "wise in their folly". In Endymion, the ideal of Christian heroism--to risk death for another--is carried to its logical extreme, and leads to the inversion of the conventionally reasonable and the sane.

In the conventional world, true heroism is impossible and can only be met with defeat, because in the process of acting man is forced to compromise his values. The shooting of elderly veterans "with wooden guns" at Ballsbridge is a minor example of the needless destruction caused by the rising. MacCarthy advises Roisin that "love is a vegetable that must be planted in a bed pan, and watered with a nice supple of disappointments", for "no primula can live that isn't planted in a reasonable amount of dirt" (120). MacCarthy's remarks are a comic rendering of the metaphysical synthesis of the dialectical confrontation in the play. Tetley, as well as Palliser to a certain extent, must confront the illusions that motivate their actions and reactions.

For much of the play, Tetley, "the idealist," misunderstands his own motives. His continued interest in the forms of behaviour--his overwhelming belief in the code or "canon of good form" in war and more significantly his fear of hanging due to his ignorance of how one might react--show that his adherence to style becomes equally as important as the goal of political independence in motivating his actions. He is captivated by his own performance. Thus, on one level, his rebellion is, like Blake's, a romantic gesture. Nevertheless, he is not romanticized as is Blake, hence, the game he is playing seems far more serious, his emotional commitments more believable. He too acts from the prompting of "face".

> Whether we lose or win is a matter that only God can decide. How we behave is something that depends on ourselves. (144)

Urged on by his enemy, Palliser, and enveigled by Emer's moment of passion, he fully embraces the role of revolutionary leader and martyr. As a soldier, moreover, he learns the strategic necessity of guerrilla warfare and advises Maginnis to go underground. In his willing martyrdom, Tetley becomes the ideal of Cuchulain, but, on the other hand, he also becomes a political realist, knowing that the Republican Army must henceforth engage in devious underground warfare. His death now becomes a practical necessity in the struggle for independence and will ensure the survival of the nationalist cause. In contrast, Blake is not a political realist, nor does his death have any value. One can at least argue that Tetley's does. From romantic hero in search of the Grail of Irish freedom, Tetley is elevated to a mythological figure. The conversion of Roisin symbolizes the reactivation of the myth of Irish nationalism. Tetley becomes the Emmet of 1916.

Maginnis' transformation in battle parallels Tetley's new power. Maginnis' battle speech has the resonance and color of epic poetry and again is a set piece of expressionistic dialogue.

> The gun was red-hot in me hands
> An' I cooled it off with oil from a tin a sardines
> The smoke'd catch me by the troat
> And tear the eyeballs from me face.
> But it was them went back--not us . . .
> Back, an then on agin,
> Till all the terrace was a hell a flames
> And the lead was rain runnin' from the gutters. (153)

Isolated in the overwhelming emotion and excitement of battle, Maginnis is transported, becoming in that moment the patriot-hero, the fierce warrior of Celtic legend and myth. Maginnis' transformation is a convincing portrayal of the tremendous attraction of violence; ". . . an' the most unholy joy came over me, for I knew then I was a soljer, an' nuttin' could ever take that away from me. . . ." (154).[9]

In the final Act, the play's coda, Palliser, Miss Garrity and Endymion play and dance to the death of the old Ireland, dominated by the Ascendancy. O'Callaghan rightly refers to Palliser as Don Quixote; for Palliser is now the anti-hero, the man without power in the revolutionary game and to his own disgrace primarily responsible for the revolutionaries' eventual triumph in having so effectively "played the other fellows' game". Similar to Blake's final dialogue in The Moon, Endymion's lyrical commentary creates a vortex of images into which the themes and motifs of the dialectical confrontations are woven. Palliser, Endymion's "beloved son", is now the scapegoat, the Christ of the old Order, juxtaposed to Tetley, the saviour of the new order of Irish nationalism. All the characters are simply playing out various roles in the disintegration of a nineteenth century world view, the passing of an

Imperial civilization.

Tetley, with his greater insight into the revolutionary process, that is, the politics of rebellion, perceives the significance of his new role and Palliser's, as the star witness for the Crown, and that they are both playing roles dictated by an inevitable historical process. Indeed, within the framework of his visionary view of Irish politics, he has become "Jesus Christ" and for him the agent of inevitability is Divine Providence.

> It's not my casting, Captain. It's Heaven that provides us with our roles in this fantastic pantomime. (161)

Although Tetley has moved from political naïveté to a realistic understanding of what is necessary to ensure continued resistance to England,

> The boys who come through this will have to do their own fighting. Only next time it will not be strictly in accordance with the rules. (160)

he is still perceived by Johnston, through Palliser, as deluded and dangerous. Tetley's self-immolation on the pyre of Irish nationhood will generate a resurgence of national consciousness; it is, however, a consciousness activated through the primitive rite of human sacrifice. Reason is subsumed in the emotional and religious fervor of what will become a "popular" cause of fulfilling Pearse's mythic ideal of the Irish political leader, the Gaelic warrior who is a messianic hero.

Tetley's ideal of the martyr-hero corresponds to the Christ-Cuchulain figure that Pearse envisioned. For example, in the poem "Renunciation", Pearse accepts the necessity of crucifixion and embraces death.

I have turned my face
To this road before me,
To the deed that I see
And the death I shall die.[10]

That Johnston is directly drawing on Pearse's mystical ideal of patriotism, a mysticism that renounces the life of the body and the life of men in society, is reinforced by allusions to the Book of Revelation that appear within the play. As Palliser helps Emer fire the machine-gun he angrily refers to the Book of Revelation.

> Now my dear, if you really want to open the Book of Revelation, all that you have to do is to . . . press the trigger. (147)

Emer does indeed open the Book of Revelation. The final hours of the battle are described in apocalyptic imagery, as earlier prophesied by Endymion:

> Till generals and ministers arrive
> Bringing a bloody sunset from the east. (123)

At the beginning of Act III, MacCarthy repeatedly refers to the fires that are engulfing the City of Dublin, to the sun that "has come out on this blood-red evening"; but Maginnis' battle speech contains the most vivid and striking references to the apocalypse. In image after image the blood and fire and fear of a violent apotheosis are etched in sharp clear images--the wave after wave lapping on the beach at Bray are "brown breakers turnin' red," bombs and bullets roar "bloody murder," "smoke tears the eyeballs from the face," "the terrace is a hell of flame". Joined to images of bloody destruction are intermittent allusions to legendary figures and battles of Irish myth. Palliser turns to Emer and says:

Weep not for Ferdia, trusting bride
He lies embattled by the ford,
Drunk with the bloodied waters of the Grand Canal. (150)

Shaped by Celtic and Christian myth, the bloody cause of Irish nationalism will once again be embraced by the Irish. Tetley's actions, it is clear, will perpetuate the cycle of vengeance and bloodshed, which has dominated the history of Ireland for the past seven hundred years. Tetley is fighting for a cause, as Palliser points out, and the English oppressor will simply be replaced by another. The new Ireland will be "in chains again, as you had it before", Palliser says, echoing Endymion's earlier remarks:

Hard-riding squires
Drink the last stirrup-cup of power.
Another lordship's here to stay. (155)

Palliser and Tetley's dialectical confrontation has no resolution. Tetley refuses Palliser's offer to save his own life, while Palliser refuses to leave the burning building and play Judas to Tetley's Jesus. And, in the end, Palliser comes off the more admirable character and Johnston's moral victor. Tetley's final justification for his death is that at least he's "doing something the world will know about" and fulfilling his destiny, whereas Palliser is choosing death in oblivion, without eschatological reward ("any pie in the sky"). The variety and vitality of the British empire, built because according to Palliser ". . . we had life and an interest in ourselves . . .", is sacrificed in Ireland and abroad because the British are bored and tired.

Johnston's final justification for the gradual disintegration of the empire is vague and weak; Johnston seems to be saying that the British empire is dying from within, and hence it does not deserve to

survive. Nevertheless, throughout the play its antithesis, the Irish nation, is repeatedly seen in negative and life-denying terms. MacCarthy, as raissonneur, focuses continually, in his humorous and satiric thrusts at Emer's repressive demeanor, on the repressed sexuality of the Irish in general, a result of Ireland's Jansenist Catholicism in which any visible manifestations of sexuality are seen as sinful. Ireland, as MacCarthy says, is a land of "saints and cemeteries". And, moreover, he comments:

> Here there are no such things as bosoms. The female frontispiece is only a plaque, for medals, holy and Celidhe. (154)

MacCarthy, the lovable clown, and earthy voice of reason in the dialectical contrast between the Ireland of Christ and death, and the Ireland of Sheridan and Wilde, presents in his Falstaffian humor, propensity for drink and vital interest in sex, a healthy alternative to the sterile persona of Emer's nun-like virginity and icy reserve symbolized, ironically, by her given name, Pearl. Her names, then, are allegorical and symbolize the combination of chastity and ferocity which characterizes Pearse's ideal of the Irish patriot. Twinned with the juxtaposition between repressed sexuality and a lusty love of life is the contrast between the pomp and beauty--the images of British civilization, and the bloody, fiery destruction of the Irish rebellion. What Ireland has left behind is nostalgically and evocatively summarized in Endymion's lyrics:

> The April wind blows cold on royalty,
> Swift, Grattan, Sheridan, Wellington and Wilde,
> Levees on Cork Hill,
> The tramp of crimson sentries in the colonnade.
> No more of Suvla Bay or Spion Kop.
> The bunting under which we spilled our colours on the globe
> Shall hang in gaunt cathedrals
> Where no one goes. (155)

In embracing its historic destiny, Ireland is foresaking the achievements of the last two hundred years manifest in Anglo-Irish figures--Swift, Sheridan, Wellington, Wilde--artists and soldiers, who have made major contributions to English-speaking civilization. What emerges out of the bloody apotheosis is an untried order.

Palliser's refusal to live is simply a refusal to participate in the revolutionary myth of dying for a cause which in that action becomes dangerously elevated, becomes sacred and dogmatic; it is, moreover, a death which he believes is unnecessary and suicidal. In The Brazen Horn Johnston writes:

> What we are after is something for which we should insist upon living, so long as this much more difficult feat remains decently open--and particularly so if living includes the annoyance of some sort of crucifixion, rather than the comfort of oblivion.[11]

Although the consequence of Palliser's choice is death, Palliser chooses to go on living as does Miss Garrity playing a final salute to life. A sacrificial figure, although more Dionysian than Christian, he does indeed embrace "a sort of crucifixion" but not like Tetley, who surrenders to the oblivion of an all-consuming passion, immolating his self in the process. Tetley and Emer sublimate the richness of sexual love and passion in their ascetic, albeit zealous commitment to the cause of Irish nationhood. For that reason alone, their "cause" is suspect, and shown to be, for all its gallantry, sterile in its ironic juxtaposition to the vitality of MacCarthy, Palliser and Endymion.

Although there is no resolution to Tetley's and Palliser's debate, as both men die for conflicting goals, the choric characters,

Endymion and MacCarthy, whose voices do not change, provide a continuous thread of a unified and coherent structure of thought and feeling. MacCarthy's impulse for life provides a constant foil to Emer's terse and hostile sterility, and Endymion's provocative insights provide an unvarying omniscient narration in juxtaposition to and counterpointing the actions of men and women who are blinded by their vision of the new Ireland emerging from the revolutionary cataclysm.

Endymion introduces the metaphor of death and rebirth, which synthesizes the conflict between ideal and action, and life and death in the play.

> Spring's a raw season,
> Boisterous with words we do not know,
> We must pack up forbidden memories
> With the court suits of dead solicitors,
> And send the bundles to the prop rooms. (155)

The "forbidden memories" of Ireland under British rule, the British law that will no longer apply, manifestations of Anglo-Ireland, are being subjugated, and transformed into the uncertainty of political and cultural upheaval. Although it is uncertain what will replace the English "lordship", spring is a season of renewal and hope. Endymion's references to spring are more succinctly and fully articulated in the last line of the play, spoken by Palliser. "Winter gives back the roses to the frost-filled earth" (165).

Palliser's antiphon to the Dionysian process of death and rebirth also signals the acceptance of death by the two men who each go to their individual crucifixions. The revolutionary dialectic is finally synthesized in an image of hope. Tetley does become a man of action; his act of dying is not condemned; it is the ideal for which he dies that

compromises that action. In contrast to the man with the ideal, Palliser, it seems, waits passively for death. But Palliser has chosen to act out the last moments of his life in a deliberate and freely chosen affirmation of life in all its "variety and vitality". Miss Garrity's final piece of "Le Jardin Ferrique" reinforces the metaphor of rebirth, which in the Dionysian and natural cycle necessarily includes death.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION: THE METAPHYSICAL REBEL

> Rebellion though apparently negative, since it creates nothing is profoundly positive in that it reveals the part of man which must always be defended.[1]

In choosing to die, rather than "play Judas" to Tetley's Jesus, Palliser of The Scythe becomes, in effect, a metaphysical rebel. Like Dobelle of The Moon, who refuses to participate in either Tausch's dream of a new industrial order or Blake's romantic and dangerous patriotism (as he says: "Why should I kill to save the scheme of things?"), Palliser refuses to condone the politics of revolution. Both men reject the chain of revenge that violent insurrection creates and, moreover, the illusory ideals that initiate it and propel it forward in its never-ending cycle. While Dobelle does not die in The Moon in the Yellow River, Blake's death, as a symbolic, sacrificial offering, signals the death of romantic idealism in the play and the demise of Dobelle's own delusions, but it does generate a resurrection of love and qualified optimism. Blake acts as a scapegoat for Dobelle, who has lost something forever with Blake's death, but in a religious sense (in its broadest context) he has been released and liberated by it. He can no longer find refuge in his cynicism and eccentricity; instead, he is forced into the world of experience once more with all its attendant evil, suffering and joy.

From the point of view of the ideological or political debate waged in the play, for and against revolution, Dobelle is throughout a

political realist. Through the catharsis provided for by Blake's act of rebellion, Dobelle asserts his unequivocal conviction that evil must be confronted and, in the last act of the play, engages in a metaphysical and psychological rebellion against conventional notions of good and evil. It can be argued that no real synthesis emerges from the dialectical process from an ideological and metaphysical perspective. Nevertheless, the play ends with an assertion of rebirth on a human and natural level, through Agnes, an embodiment of the life force, who has the last "gesture", an epiphany signalling the inexorable supremacy of the natural, Dionysian cycle of death and rebirth.

Unlike Dobelle, Palliser, motivated by the emotional urge to save "face", unwittingly is implicated in the political rebellion he so vehemently condemns. As we have seen, he redeems himself by dying, in a final gesture of integrity, reaffirming his rejection of Tetley's misguided romantic nationalism, which is used to justify "the politics of murder," hence, extremely dangerous. Tetley becomes a Functionalist, who is defined and rejected by Johnston in his introduction to The Golden Cuckoo:

> Our generation distrusts the word What? and only really enjoys contemplating How? It is part of the prevailing philosophy of the day--the philosophy of Functionalism. The ultimate criterion for all questions is not What is it? but How does it operate? What is true is what works: what is untrue is what fails to work.[2]

It is not Tetley's dying that Johnston rejects; rather, through Palliser, he condemns the "cause" that Tetley dies for, the values he represents. More important, Tetley's "cause" which will let him down in the end and will be compromised in Tetley's having played "the oppressors' game", is validated and sanctified by Tetley's death. Witness the conversion of

Roisin and Maginnis, who represent the populace, once more converted to the bloody cause of Irish patriotism. In contrast, Palliser dies as a final assertion of the futility of violent, revolutionary action. Harold Ferrar rightly says:

> Palliser . . . chooses a quiet death over a martyrdom that would require revenge: again and again the character who represents the centre of value in Johnston's work abjures a cycle of evil, a choice which empowers him to accept life joyously and to meet death fearlessly, like a bridegroom embracing his bride.[3]

Death is Palliser's final victory, one not to be feared or rejected--for a crucial tenet in Johnston's metaphysics is that the fear of death is an illusion.

> In actual fact the normal Man is not at all averse to Death, provided that it comes at the right time, and he shows this fact quite clearly in his urge towards a personal maturity which is only another way of describing Death. . . . Yet he is probably not mature enough to be safely relieved from this purposeful illusion that Death is something to be avoided purely for the sake of avoiding it. This instinct keeps him from suicide in moments of despair or exhaustion, and as such it is highly important. But it is a delusion, none the less. Man would be frantic without the gift of Death.[4]

Thus, Palliser looks "Azrael in the face" and engages in the ritual of death, by which sacrifice--absurd perhaps from a conventional point of view--reason is elevated momentarily, transcending the passion of the revolutionary cause. Palliser's act of metaphysical rebellion, then, results in a synthesis of the ideological and psychological conflict in the play. Because his death is a resolution of the dialectical juxtaposition of reason and revolution and, moreover, because of its staging, with the symbolic trappings of music and poetry (even fire), it is immensely satisfying. Johnston does indeed, with The Scythe, achieve the melding of political and religious ritual and, moreover, as in The

Moon his work re-asserts the vitality of the natural order, with the promise of rebirth in "the frost-filled earth."

Unlike Blake, Dobelle or Palliser, Dotheright of The Golden Cuckoo does not share any of the external trappings of the conventional hero. Because of their rejection of conventional values and modes of behaviour, it can be argued that Blake, to a certain extent, and certainly Dobelle and Palliser are anti-heroes, but none are so clearly unconventional as is Dotheright who has much in common with Endymion, the wise "fool" of The Scythe. The Golden Cuckoo, dismissed by some as merely lightweight farce,[5] does not share the contrapuntal blend of serious action and dialogue with absurdist comedy that characterizes The Moon and The Scythe. Although The Golden Cuckoo must be taken seriously as a complete and succinct statement of Johnston's social, political and moral iconoclasm, the play is comic from beginning to end, exemplifying in the process Ezra Pound's argument that comedy provides "the best approach to matters of serious Thought."[6] For all the clearly apparent differences, however, The Cuckoo also shares crucial similarities of form, theme and character with the other three plays dealing with revolution, and should be considered in any comprehensive discussion of Johnston's dramatic treatment of the revolutionary theme.

A reading of The Golden Cuckoo re-affirms the view of Johnston as metaphysical rebel, and reinforces the contention that he employs a dialectical method in structure and theme in each one of the plays dealing with revolution. The Golden Cuckoo can be examined from the vantage of "the revolutionary dialectic" for debate is engaged in, throughout the play, on an ideological level between Dotheright and the representative Functionalist, Lowd, and on a metaphysical level by

Dotheright and his voices. In addition, Johnston's most recently revised Golden Cuckoo (1979) employs a formal dialectic by means of the use of contrasting modes. Johnston has introduced a Brechtian device into what was originally a representational three-act play. The expressionist influence, though slight, is nevertheless present in the use of stereotypical characters, who are meant to represent a cross-section of Dublin society. They are embodiments of varying social attitudes, and more like Jonsonian "humours" than fully rounded characters; this is demonstrated in their behaviour and response to Dotheright, which is predictable and true to type, and only changes toward the end of the play. The number of characters has grown from eleven in the 1939 production to fifteen in the most recent version. The play's structure has been modified; three acts have been replaced by five scenes, and a young boy has been added as a narrator-commentator who appears first onstage to introduce the initial scene then reappears intermittently throughout the play, finally appearing at the end to frame the closing action.

The Boy's greeting to the audience is an invitation to the audience to participate in the play: we are immediately warned that the realistic and comic surface of the play should not conceal from us the serious intent and nature of Dotheright's mock-rebellion. The Boy thus acts as a distancing device, underscoring the action and forcing the audience to respond objectively to a series of humorous situations and comic dialogue that invoke serious questions of conscience. The Boy's function is made explicit when he returns to the stage with the goat early in the first scene. Interfering with the speeches and actions of the other characters, he is told to go. However, he comments that his role is to provide an interpretive link between action and audience: "Oh

very well if you want me to go I'll go. But nobody out there will understand a word if I do" (213). Just as expressionist elements of style in the other three plays (particularly The Old Lady and The Scythe) heighten action and dialogue, momentarily isolating characters and their actions, forcing us "above the flow of the play", so too The Boy's function is, effectively, Brechtian. In addition, through the agency of The Boy, a note of absurdism is injected into the play. As each of the characters identifies himself by name, and more emphatically, by occupation, in the first scene, the Boy calls himself Alexander. This soon changes to Peter, then George, in the following scene, underscoring the fact that the characters are certainly not what, and perhaps not who, they seem.

In fact, they are in the process of becoming, and the strong emphasis on identity is reminiscent of Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of an Author. Within The Golden Cuckoo, Dotheright is the author, whose revolution and sacrifice is the catalyst triggering the other leading characters' moral, psychological and spiritual growth. As well, Dotheright is a comic paradigm of the existential hero, firmly removed from his society, first by his superficial eccentricity of behaviour but also, more significantly, by his moral rectitude and his decision to act out his moral convictions.

The character of Dotheright and his drama is based on a true incident, described by Johnston in the introduction to the play.

> The Golden Cuckoo is based upon the exploit of an old man called Francis Walter Doheny who--oppressed as we all sometimes are by a sense of the injustice of life--went out one evening in 1926 and broke the windows of a Post Office in Kilkenny, calling this gesture the Saint-Edward's Crown-Barker-Parsival-Ironore-Inoco-One-Man-Rebellion. There was a symbolic significance behind each word of this resounding title, and he

> also made it clear that his action was not inspired by any personal animus towards the Postmistress. . . . He then surrendered to a solitary policeman, and was conducted to the local lockup, singing his "Rational Anthem." (197)

Johnston saluted Doheny through Dotheright because Doheny had the courage to rebel against "the tyranny of Democracy." Dotheright, too, rebels against the common man because he is corrupt, and engages in a dialectic or debate both on an ideological and metaphysical level in his one-man rebellion.

The ideological context of the debate centres on Dotheright's attempt to be paid for an obituary written for The Comet newspaper. Because he is initially refused payment for an obituary of a man who has not died, his attempt to be recompensed is transformed into a crusade for justice in an unjust world. The major motif of the dialectical struggle waged in the play centres on money and payment (one cannot get something for nothing, as Lowd warns) and, conversely, justice and injustice. A number of the characters in the play are corrupt; all save one are imposters or poseurs from a moral point of view. Thus, their movement from apparent innocence and illusion, to the reality of self-knowledge is part of the dialectical juxtaposition of illusion and reality, corruption and virtue. The payment to Dotheright, the sole man of conscience, is pivotal to Hooley's and Penniwise's getting their monetary due, which is their right. In fact, however, all the characters are after something, having compromised what was of value to them in some way and in so doing having become Functionalists. Lowd, however, is Dotheright's dialectical opposition in the play. He can refuse to pay Dotheright for the supposedly redundant obituary because Dotheright has no political power. In contrast to Lowd, Dotheright is a poor eccentric living on the fringe

of society. As a Functionalist, Lowd is blatantly dishonest. Although, perhaps, "a crook with a conscience", Lowd's social conscience has been sacrificed for "what works." He agrees to pay Dotheright later in the play, only because he is threatened by disclosure of the sordid dealings concerning his friend, Boddy.

Like the revolutionaries of The Moon and The Scythe, Dotheright decides to become "a man of action." His rebellion, however, is not motivated by romantic ideals of patriotism but, instead, stems from a conviction that contemporary society is unjust, as Dotheright says:

> . . . there is only one evil that matters--Injustice. Injustice is the supreme sin--not in those who commit it, but in those who submit to it. For to do so is to ignore the eternal verities and to admit that life itself is evil. That is the Sin against the Holy Ghost. (244)

In that Dotheright is pitted against a society that cannot recognize his morality, he is similar to Emmet of The Old Lady, who is ironically an outsider in a society paying lip-service to patriotic ideals. Dotheright is influenced, moreover, by the political rebels of the past, aided by Hooley's advice "to kick up hell." Dotheright describes the issue, from a political perspective, when he comments: "You see, gentlemen, we have here two conflicting points of view--the constitutional and revolutionary. Which of them is right?" (223).

Choosing the revolutionary course of action, Dotheright stages a one-man rebellion, which is a parody of the 1916 uprising. The scene of Dotheright's rebellion--a small post office in which a visiting Irish-American tourist is dedicating a plaque to the rebels of 1916--is strongly ironic. Mrs. Tyler, the tourist, declaims: "'Where would we be today without our Rebels? Would we be living in a free land where the

rule of law guarantees the rights and liberties of even the humblest?'" (240). Her speech, of course, underscores the profound irony lying at the heart of the play, which is that the rule of law has been perverted disallowing the "rights and liberties of the humblest" personified in Dotheright, who has been "careless and indifferent" about money, and has "not troubled to learn this thing that is called What's What." Thus, the ideals of society only operate in service to the monied and powerful. In response to Mrs. Tyler, Dotheright disrupts the broadcast of the ceremony, and recites his own Proclamation of his revolutionary regime.

> I propose a Democracy dedicated to the triple slogan, "one Truth, One Law, One Justice"--a Commonwealth where men shall be given to dignity, and not Dignities to men, and where Liberty and Equity shall be free as the winds of Heaven. (245-246)

The comedy continues as the other characters gather round Dotheright in general disarray and Letty, inspired, "distributes straws . . . to the departing Public in a fantastic parody of the mad Ophelia" (246). Letty's liberation exemplifies the effect of Dotheright's rebellion, for he, in lines reminiscent of Blake, fights his battle with words, in a mock-heroic style. "What are our only weapons? They are words--big-bellied words, billowing like galleons out of Espanola--words that strike fire from flint" (247). As the scene continues Dotheright's language is increasingly intense and heightened, becoming biblical and apocalyptic. "That gentlemen, is our Baptism by Grace. Here now is our Baptism by Fire!" (247). The action reaches the surrealistically comic as Miss Peering dumps a receptacle of "water" over Dotheright, just before he baptizes his Triple Crown Four Man Republic, "by fire", smashing in the door of the Post Office.

Dotheright's reward for his one-man rebellion is incarceration

in an insane asylum; thus we are introduced to the motif of the outsider as the sane individual in an insane world, a theme similarly exemplified in Endymion of The Scythe. Furthermore, Dotheright, like Endymion, is also a mad visionary and, in the process of acting on his moral and spiritual vision, liberates several of the other characters. He acts as a moral touchstone; moreover, he is a scapegoat, symbolized, ironically, by the goat, led around by the Boy throughout the play. For, although Dotheright does not physically die (as do Blake, Palliser, and even Tetley), he is condemned to the life-in-death of the insane. His fate is a final, irrevocable inversion of the fate of the revolutionary of popular myth, confirming his status as a comic, existential hero, one who is forever Don Quixote in a land of windmills.

By means of Dotheright's sacrifice, the characters transcend their failure to confront life honestly. Hooley becomes honest; Miss Peering and Penniwise are reunited as are Letty and Paddy. Penniwise is freed to follow his vocation: art will no longer be sacrificed to utility. Lowd, in true ironic justice, wins his just deserts. Only Mrs. Vanderbilt --a comic exemplum of the avarice motivating the Functionalist, Lowd--is immune. But, in her absurdity, she already inhabits Mr. Dotheright's world.

Dotheright, too, is forever altered by his act of rebellion. What was political and social iconoclasm carried to its extreme, is now extended to a metaphysical and spiritual context. For, as a type of St. Joan, Dotheright pursues a dialectical debate with his voices. Having stated that what he has done "is not for purely personal reasons," but rather "for humanity--and in obedience to [his] voices", he despairs at the failure to be taken seriously by the law and society he has

reacted against. "I am betrayed. Oh Heaven--betrayed!" (263). It is not merely society that has betrayed him, but his voices and God, who mock his services. Nevertheless, Dotheright's disillusionment is resolved in a final, albeit comic, epiphany. Contentedly resigned to spending his remaining years in the insane asylum he rejects his role as saint:

> As a Saint, I am a failure. But as a Madman--ah, there at least, I am in the forefront of the field. So let us all be happy in the facts, whatever, they may be. For to be otherwise is to die twice. (275)

The point is that Dotheright is a saintly lunatic who recognizes the "lunacy" of reality, which must be accepted in order that the individual not "die twice." Dotheright's moral and spiritual integrity is rewarded by a "Baptism of Grace" when the cock (sold to him by Miss Peering under the false pretence of being a hen) lays an egg. This is Dotheright's miracle. And the play has come full circle, in a kind of surreal parody of a quest for spiritual certitude. Dotheright's metaphysical rebellion is confirmed, his metaphysical debate with a deaf God, resolved.

The mock-miracle that ends The Golden Cuckoo parallels the ritualistic resolutions of both The Moon and The Scythe, confirming a relationship between religious ritual and the political that lies so profoundly at the heart of Denis Johnston's work. In none of the four plays dealing with a revolutionary situation is the political dialectic completely resolved. Johnston rejects Tetley's motivation and values, but respects his political realism. In a political context, even Palliser's act is revolutionary, for he rejects being part of a particular political process. Dotheright's political rebellion throws the rebellions of Emmet, Blake and Tetley into relief. All three are at least suspect,

if not condemned, because of the illusory, romantic ideals that motivate their actions. Of the three, Tetley is most clearly condemned because he so unequivocally and knowingly plays "the oppressor's game." He becomes a "Functionalist" in the context of Johnston's metaphysics. Dotheright's non-violent (for the most part) revolution, a comic inversion of the actions of Johnston's political revolutionaries, is right and necessary. For Dotheright is most unequivocally a metaphysical rebel, reacting against conventional notions of good and evil, within a corrupt society.

Dotheright's political rebellion is thus a metaphor of the metaphysical rebellion that must occur in the movement from illusion to reality. Johnston's metaphysical rebels, Dobelle, Palliser and Dotheright embrace reality in the process of reacting, in some measure, against the status quo, whether it be conventional ideas of good and evil or violent revolution or a corrupt society. Although anti-heroic in a conventional sense, they are heroic in Johnston's vision because they rebel. Their rebellion is in each case "a creative act." And in each play, their metaphysical rebellion is signalled and blessed by a ritualistic act of epiphany, confirming Johnston's profoundly optimistic vision of life in which those who have the courage to assert themselves, to rebel despite the risk of death, may, indeed, "be in command tomorrow."

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

[1]Martin Esslin, An Anatomy of Drama (New York: Hill and Wang, 1976), p. 28.

[2]Denis Johnston, The Brazen Horn (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1976), frontispiece.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Gene A. Barnett, Denis Johnston (Boston: Twayne Publishers: G. K. Hall and Co., 1978), p. 81.

[5]William Irwin Thompson, The Imagination of an Insurrection: Dublin, Easter 1916 (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. v.

[6]Robert O'Driscoll, ed., Theatre and Nationalism in twentieth-century Ireland (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto, 1971), p. 15.

[7]Johnston, The Dramatic Works of Denis Johnston, I (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977), p. 87.

[8]Robert Brustein, The Theatre of Revolt (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1962), p. 4.

[9]Ibid.

[10]David Krause, "Sean O'Casey and the higher nationalism: the desecration of Ireland's household gods," Theatre and Nationalism in twentieth-century Ireland, p. 115.

[11]Virginia O'Reilly, "The Realism of Denis Johnston," Myth and Reality in Irish Literature, ed. Joseph Ronsley (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 1977), p. 281.

[12]Albert Camus, The Rebel (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), p. 21.

[13]Ibid., p. 10.

[14]Richard Ohmann, Shaw: The Style and the Man (Middleton, Connecticut: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1962), p. 67.

[15]Shaw's plays are "dialectical" in the sense that they contain debates or discussions "that display reality at a disadvantage by contrast with the ideal order of things." See Ohmann, pp. 66-67.

[16]Robert Hogan, After the Irish Renaissance (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1967), p. 13.

[17]Johnston, The Dramatic Works of Denis Johnston, II (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe Ltd., 1979), p. 7.

[18]Barnett, p. 124.

[19]Curtis Canfield, "A Note on the Nature of Expressionism and Denis Johnston's Plays," Plays of Changing Ireland (New York: Macmillan, 1936), p. 26.

[20]Johnston, The Dramatic Works, I, p. 80.

[21]Ibid.

[22]John Willet, Expressionism (London: World Univ. Library, 1970), p. 174.

[23]Johnston, The Dramatic Works, II, p. 79.

[24]Ibid., p. 81.

[25]Denis Johnston, "The Old Lady Says 'No!'" The Dramatic Works of Denis Johnston, I, p. 27.
All subsequent references to The Old Lady Says "No!" are to this edition and are cited in the text by page number in parentheses.

[26]Canfield, p. 30.

[27]Raymond Williams, Drama from Ibsen to Brecht (Middlesex: Penguin, 1973), pp. 320-321.

[28]Johnston, The Dramatic Works, I, p. 89.

Chapter II

[1]Denis Johnston, "The Moon in the Yellow River," The Dramatic Works of Denis Johnston, II (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe Ltd., 1979), p. 81.

All subsequent references to The Moon in the Yellow River are from this edition and are cited in the text by page number in parentheses.

[2]Gene A. Barnett, Denis Johnston (Boston: Twayne Publishers: G. K. Hall and Co., 1978), p. 44.

[3]Harold Ferrar, Denis Johnston's Irish Theatre (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1973), p. 43.

[4]Tausch's ideal of freedom bears some similarity to Hegel's concept of the free man who realizes himself in the duties and responsibilities invested in him by the state.

See Henry D. Aiken, The Age of Ideology: The Nineteenth Century Philosophers (New York: Mentor, 1963), p. 79.

[5]William Irwin Thompson, The Imagination of an Insurrection: Dublin, Easter 1916 (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 114.

[6]F. X. Martin, Leaders and Men of the Easter Rising: Dublin 1916 (New York: Cornell Univ. Pres, 1967), p. 248.

[7]Barnett, p. 47.

[8]Robert Brustein, The Theatre of Revolt (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1962), p. 14.

[9]Ferrar, p. 74.

The motif of the unicorn is central to much of Johnston's work. See Ferrar's discussion of A Bride for the Unicorn for an insightful and helpful commentary on Johnston's myth of the unicorn, much of it applicable to Blake of The Moon.

[10]Wulstan Phillipson, "Denis Johnston," The Month, XXV (June, 1961), p. 367.

[11]Dante's ejaculation to Beatrice as used by Johnston echoes Juno's line in Act III of O'Casey's Juno and the Paycock: "Take away this murdherin' hate, an' give us Thine own eternal love!"

[12]Johnston, The Brazen Horn (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1976), p. 184.

[13]Johnston, Two Plays (London: Jonathan Cape, 1932), pp. 153-154.

Chapter III

[1]Denis Johnston, "Up the Rebels!" "The Scythe and the Sunset," The Dramatic Works of Denis Johnston, I (Toronto: Macmillan, 1977), p. 86. All subsequent references to The Scythe and the Sunset are to this edition and are cited in the text by page number in parentheses.

[2]Johnston, Nine Rivers from Jordan (London: Derek Verschoyle, 1953), pp. 140-141.

[3]Ibid., p. 141.

[4]Robert Brustein, The Theatre of Revolt (Boston: Little, Brown and Co.), p. 14.

[5]Poets of the Insurrection (Dublin and London: Maunsel and Co. Ltd., 1918), p. 10.

[6]F. X. Martin, Leaders and Men of the Easter Rising: Dublin 1916 (New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1967), p. 247.

[7]Ibid., p. 128.

[8]Gene A. Barnett, Denis Johnston (Boston: Twayne Publishers: G. K. Hall and Co., 1978), p. 145.

[9]Maginnis' transformation in battle parallels that of the rebel hero of Liam O'Flaherty's novel Insurrection (New York: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1950). Both characters, initially unwilling participants in the rising, become motivated by a primitive impulse, which could be termed blood-lust, and which is associated with the hero worship of a messianic leader.

[10]Padraic H. Pearse, Plays. Stories. Poems (Dublin: The Talbot Press, Ltd., 1966), p. 324.

[11]Johnston, The Brazen Horn (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1976), p. 195.

Chapter IV

[1]Albert Camus, The Rebel (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), p. 19.

[2]Denis Johnston, "Introduction," The Golden Cuckoo and Other Plays (London: Jonathan Cape, 1954), p. 8.

[3]Harold Ferrar, Denis Johnston's Irish Theatre (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1973), p. 70.

[4]Johnston, The Brazen Horn (Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1976), p. 104.

[5]Thomas Hogan, "Denis Johnston," Envoy, III (August, 1950), p. 44.

[6]Johnston, "Concerning the Unicorn," The Dramatic Works of Denis Johnston, II (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe Ltd., 1979), p. 13.

[7]Johnston, "The Golden Cuckoo," The Dramatic Works, II, p. 197. All subsequent references to The Golden Cuckoo are from this edition and are cited in the text by page number in parentheses.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Johnston, Denis. Blind Man's Bluff. London: Jonathan Cape, 1938.

_____. The Brazen Horn. Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1976.

_____. The Dramatic Works of Denis Johnston, I. Toronto: Macmillan, 1977.

_____. The Dramatic Works of Denis Johnston, II. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, Ltd., 1979.

_____. The Golden Cuckoo. Rev. ed. "The Irish Play Series:6." Newark, Delaware: Proscenium Press, 1971.

_____. The Golden Cuckoo and Other Plays. London: Jonathan Cape, 1954.

_____. The Moon in the Yellow River and The Old Lady Says No: Two Plays. London: Jonathan Cape, 1932.

_____. Nine Rivers from Jordan. London: Derek Verschoyle, 1953.

_____. The Old Lady Says "No!" and Other Plays. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1960.

Secondary Sources

A. E. The Interpreters. London: Macmillan, 1922.

Aiken, Henry D. The Age of Ideology: The Nineteenth Century Philosophers. New York: Mentor, 1963.

Alvarez, A. The Savage God: A Study of Suicide. Middlesex: Penguin, 1971.

Arendt, Hannah. On Revolution. New York: Viking Press, 1963.

Ayling, Ronald. Continuity and Innovation in Sean O'Casey's Drama: A Critical Monograph. Salzburg, Austria: Univ. of Salzburg, 1976.

Barnet, S., Berman, M. and Burto, W., eds. The Genius of the Irish Theatre. New York: New American Library, 1960.

Barnett, Gene A. Denis Johnston. Boston: Twayne Publishers, G. K. Hall and Co., 1978.

Beckett, J. C. A Short History of Ireland. London: Hutchinson Univ. Library, 1967.

Bentley, Eric, ed. The Theory of the Modern Stage. Middlesex: Penguin, 1978.

Brinton, Crane. The Anatomy of Revolution. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1952.

Brown, Malcolm. The Politics of Irish Literature. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1972.

Brustein, Robert. The Theatre of Revolt. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1962.

Camus, Albert. The Rebel. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956.

Canfield, Curtis. "A Note on the Nature of Expressionism and Denis Johnston's Plays." Plays of Changing Ireland. New York: Macmillan, 1936.

Cole, John O. and Schepman, F. L. The Rebel: His Moment and His Motives. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971.

Dangerfield, George. The Damnable Question: A Study in Anglo-Irish Relations. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1976.

Dante, Alighieri. The Divine Comedy: Hell. Trans. Dorothy L. Sayers. Middlesex: Penguin, 1949.

Davie, Donald. Ezra Pound: Poet as Sculptor. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1964.

Dobrée, Bonamy. "Sean O'Casey and the Irish Drama." Modern Judgements: Sean O'Casey. Ed. Ronald Ayling. London: Macmillan, 1969.

Edwards, Hilton. "Denis Johnston." The Bell, XIII (October, 1946), 7-18.

Edwards, Ruth Dudley. Patrick Pearse: The Triumph of Failure. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1977.

Ellis-Fermor, Una. The Irish Dramatic Movement. London: Methuen, 1939.

Esslin, Martin. An Anatomy of Drama. New York: Hill and Wang, 1976.

_____. The Theatre of the Absurd. New York: Doubleday, 1969.

Ferrar, Harold. Denis Johnston's Irish Theatre. Dublin: The Dolmen Press, 1973.

Frye, Northrop. Anatomy of Criticism. New York: Atheneum, 1969.

Furness, R. S. Expressionism. London: Methuen, 1973.

Gaskell, Ronald. Drama and Reality: the European theatre since Ibsen. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972.

Gassner, John. Form and Idea in Modern Theatre. New York: The Dryden Press, 1936.

Gregory, Lady Augusta. Lady Gregory's Journals, 1916-1930. Lennox Robinson, ed. New York: Macmillan, 1947.

Henderson, Gordon. "An Interview with Denis Johnston." The Journal of Irish Literature, II (May-September, 1973), 30-44.

Hickey, Des and Smith, Gus. Flight from the Celtic Twilight. New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co. Inc., 1973.

Hinchliffe, Arnold P. The Absurd. London: Methuen, 1974.

Hogan, Robert. After the Irish Renaissance. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1967.

_____, ed. Seven Irish Plays 1946-1964. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1967.

Hogan, Robert and Kilroy, James. The Irish Literary Theatre, 1899-1901. Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1975.

Hogan, Thomas. "Denis Johnston." Envoy, III (August, 1950), 33-46.

Jones, Howard Mumford. Revolution and Romanticism. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1974.

Joyce, James. Ulysses. New York: Random House, 1961.

Kaufman, G. and Connelly, M. Beggar on Horseback. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924.

Kaufmann, Walter, ed. The Portable Nietzsche. Middlesex: Penguin, 1976.

Kelly, John S. "The Fall of Parnell and the Rise of Irish Literature: An Investigation." Anglo-Irish Studies. Ed. P. J. Drudy. Foxton, Cambridge: Burlington Press, 1976.

Krause, David. "Sean O'Casey and the higher nationalism: the desecration of Ireland's household gods." Theatre and Nationalism in twentieth-century Ireland. Ed. Robert O'Driscoll. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1971.

Loftus, Richard J. Nationalism in Modern Anglo-Irish Poetry. Madison and Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964.

Martin, F. X., ed. Leaders and Men of the Easter Rising: Dublin 1916. New York: Cornell Univ. Press, 1967.

Mazlish, Bruce. The Revolutionary Ascetic: Evolution of a Political Type. New York: Basic Books, 1976.

Mercier, Vivian. The Irish Comic Tradition. London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962.

_____. "The Plays of Denis Johnston." The Nation, 194 (13 May, 1961), 416-417.

Norman, Edward. A History of Modern Ireland. Middlesex: Penguin, 1971.

Noyes, Russell. English Romantic Poetry and Prose. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1956.

O'Brien, Conor Cruise. States of Ireland. Great Britain: Hutchinson and Co., 1972.

O'Casey, Sean. Three Plays. London: Macmillan, 1964.

O'Driscoll, Robert. Theatre and Nationalism in twentieth-century Ireland. Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1971.

O'Flaherty, Liam. Insurrection. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1950.

OhAodha, Micheal. Theatre in Ireland. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974.

Ohmann, Richard. Shaw: The Style and the Man. Middleton, Connecticut: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1962.

O'Reilly, Virginia. "The Realism of Denis Johnston." Myth and Reality in Irish Literature. Ed. Joseph Ronsley. Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 1977.

Pearse, Padraic. Plays. Stories. Poems. Dublin: Talbot Press Ltd., 1966.

Pettet, Edwin Burr. "The Enduring Anti-Heroic." Massachusetts Review, 2 (Summer, 1961), 783-788.

Phillipson, Wulstan. "Denis Johnston." The Month, XXV (June, 1961), 365-368.

Poets of the Insurrection. Dublin and London: Maunsel and Co. Ltd., 1918.

Robinson, Lennox, ed. The Irish Theatre. London: Macmillan, 1939.

Rollins, Ronald. "O'Casey and Johnston: Different Reactions to the 1916 Easter Rising." Sean O'Casey Review, 4 (Fall, 1977), 19-29.

*Ronsley, Joseph, ed. Myth and Reality in Irish Literature. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 1977.

Ryan, Desmond. The Rising. Dublin: Golden Eagle Books Ltd., 1966.

Shaw, George Bernard. Heartbreak House. Middlesex: Penguin, 1946.

_____. Man and Superman. Middlesex: Penguin, 1946.

_____. Saint Joan. Middlesex: Penguin, 1946.

"Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook." The Irish Times. Dublin, 1917.

Strindberg, August. A Dream Play and the Ghost Sonata. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1966.

Sypher, Willie, ed. Comedy. New York: Doubleday, 1956.

Thompson, William Irwin. The Imagination of an Insurrection: Dublin, Easter 1916. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

Trotsky, Leon. Literature and Revolution. New York: Russell and Russell, 1957.

Weygandt, Cornelius. Irish Plays and Playwrights. Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1966.

Willet, John. Expressionism. London: World University Library, 1970.

Williams, Raymond. Drama from Ibsen to Brecht. Middlesex: Penguin, 1973.

Worth, Katherine. The Irish Drama of Europe from Yeats to Beckett. London: Athlone Press, 1978.

Yeats, W. B. Selected Plays. Ed. A. Norman Jeffares. London: Macmillan, 1964.

*Ronsley, Joseph, ed. Denis Johnston: A Retrospective. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe Ltd., 1981

Joseph Ronsley's recently published collection of essays was received after this thesis was written; however, it is included as a welcome addition to published commentary on Denis Johnston's dramatic and autobiographical works.